

Good Shepherd Mediation Program
5356 Chew Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19138
(o) 215.843-5413 | (f) 215.843.2080
www.phillymediators.org

SELF-TEST ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

The following test is designed to help you start thinking about your personal style(s) of dealing with conflicts. Please take the 10-15 minutes necessary to complete the test. It contains pairs of possible responses to conflict.

You will learn most about your own style if you think of a specific relationship (with child, spouse, work associate, etc.) as you choose the “A” or “B” response for each pair. Your choice will then be based on an experiential understanding of your tendencies. Because you may respond to conflict at work in a way that is very different from your response to a domestic conflict, you may want to take the test several times to discover your styles in different contexts.

In some pairs, neither “A” nor “B” may seem very appropriate; nevertheless, try to choose your more likely responses.

1. A. Differences are not always worth worrying about.
 B. I make an effort to get my way.

2. A. I try to find a compromise solution.
 B. I may sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of another.

3. A. I try to win my position.
 B. Sometimes I let others take responsibility for solving the problem.

4. A. I try to do what is necessary to avoid tension.
 B. I seek other’s help in working out a solution.

5. A. I give up some points in exchange for others.
 B. I assert my wishes.

6. A. I try to not hurt the other's feelings.
 B. I attempt to deal with all of her and my concerns.

7. A. I offer rewards so the other will comply with my wishes.
 B. I assume that in a conflict all parties may be able to come out winners.

8. A. I ask for more than I expect to get.
B. If it makes him happy, I let him maintain his views.
9. A. I try to surface all her concerns.
B. I sometimes avoid taking a position which would create controversy.
10. A. I propose a middle ground.
B. I seek others' help in working out a solution.
10. A. I use whatever authority I have to convince the other of my position.
B. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.
12. A. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness.
B. I try to soothe other's feelings and preserve the relationship.
13. A. In conflict, everybody comes out with something, though not all that was expected.
B. I am concerned with satisfying all our wishes.
14. A. I don't let others abuse my rights.
B. In a conflict, I may sacrifice my wishes for those of another.
15. A. I try to postpone the issue until I have time to think it over carefully.
B. If it means more to the other, I let him maintain his position.
16. A. I invite the other to join with me to deal with the differences between us.
B. I assert my rights.
17. A. I will make an effort to go along with what the other wants.
B. I attempt to get all concerns and issues out in the open.
18. A. Differences are not always worth worrying about.
B. In a conflict, everyone should get part of what they want.
19. A. To keep peace, I will sacrifice my wishes for those of the other.
B. It's more important to be right than to be friendly.
20. A. I try to do whatever is necessary to avoid tension.
B. I assume each of us must give up something for the good of whole.

SCORING AND INTERPRETATION SELF-TEST ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

In each of the 20 situations, circle the letter you chose, "A" or "B". In the score column at the bottom of the chart, total the number of letters circled.

Then, note the name of the style in the column in which you had the highest number of circled choices.

In the chart at the bottom of this column, write the name of the style (e.g., accommodate) in which you had the highest score and write that in the style column on the "1st" line. Write the number of responses in the "Score" column. Repeat that process for each of the styles.

See next page for interpretation of scores.

Order of Your Style Preferences		
Choice	Style	Score
1st		
2nd		
3rd		
4th		
5th		

Situations	Your Response Choices				
	#1	A	B		
#2			B		A
#3	B	A			
#4	A			B	
#5		B			A
#6			A	B	
#7		A		B	
#8			B		A
#9	B			A	
#10				B	A
#11		A			B
#12	A		B		
#13				B	A
#14		A	B		
#15	A		B		
#16		B		A	
#17			A	B	
#18	A				B
#19		B	A		
#20	A				B
SCORES					
	Avoid	Persuade	Accommodate	Conciliate	Negotiate
Conflict Styles					

RESPONSES TO CONFLICT

There are many ways to respond to conflict. You can learn to choose the most effective response based on the importance of the relationship with the other disputant, the importance of the issue involved, the parties' level of hostility, time, place, authority, power, negotiability, resources and level of trust.

AVOID

People avoid conflicts by:

- Choosing not to address the conflict because the issue is not important
- Choosing not to address the conflict because the relationship is not important
- Ignoring it
- Pretending it isn't there
- Hoping the conflict will go away without further action
- Denying or hiding true feelings
- Withdrawing from the situation

People who always avoid conflict never have their needs met. Remember: avoiding a problem does not solve it. But it may be the best choice if you fear confrontation or lack power in a given situation.

POSTPONE

“Responsible postponing” means acknowledging the emotions involved and scheduling a meeting to discuss the conflict at a later time. Postponing works best when:

- The relationship and the issue are important, but the parties are too hostile or angry at the moment so a cooling off period is needed
- There is not enough time available at the moment to thoroughly discuss the issues
- The location is inappropriate for a confidential discussion (e.g., not comfortable, not private, not neutral, inconvenient)

ACCOMMODATE

Accommodating means going along with the other disputant(s) and acknowledging that you made the decision to concede. This is also known as “choosing your battles.”

People may choose to accommodate when:

- The conflict is not important
- The relationship will benefit
- The other person's needs are very strong
- The other person has the power or authority.

Remember: people who always accommodate never have their needs met.

PERSUADE/FORCE/COMPETE

People may choose to persuade or force the other disputant to “do it my way.”

Force or persuasion is a constructive response when:

- There is no common ground
- There is no willingness to change
- The issue is not negotiable (e.g., danger, rules, laws)
- It is an emergency that calls for an immediate response

NEGOTIATE—COMPROMISE

Negotiation is a process for resolving disputes when parties assume that it is not possible to meet all the parties’ needs, but the parties are willing to meet and discuss an acceptable agreement that will ease the tension and change some behavior.

Negotiation works best when:

- There is room for give and take
- There are limited resources that must be divided
- There is some time available to discuss the issues
- The relationship between the parties has, at least, “arms-length” trust

Negotiation typically results in a compromise.

COLLABORATE—COOPERATE—CONCILIATE—COMMUNICATE

Collaboration is joint problem-solving for mutual gain. It is the optimal response to conflict because cooperation builds and sustains relationships. It works best when:

- The parties involved are willing to work together to find a win-win resolution to the conflict
- There is a high level of trust
- The parties are willing to take responsibility for their role in the conflict
- The parties have respect for each other

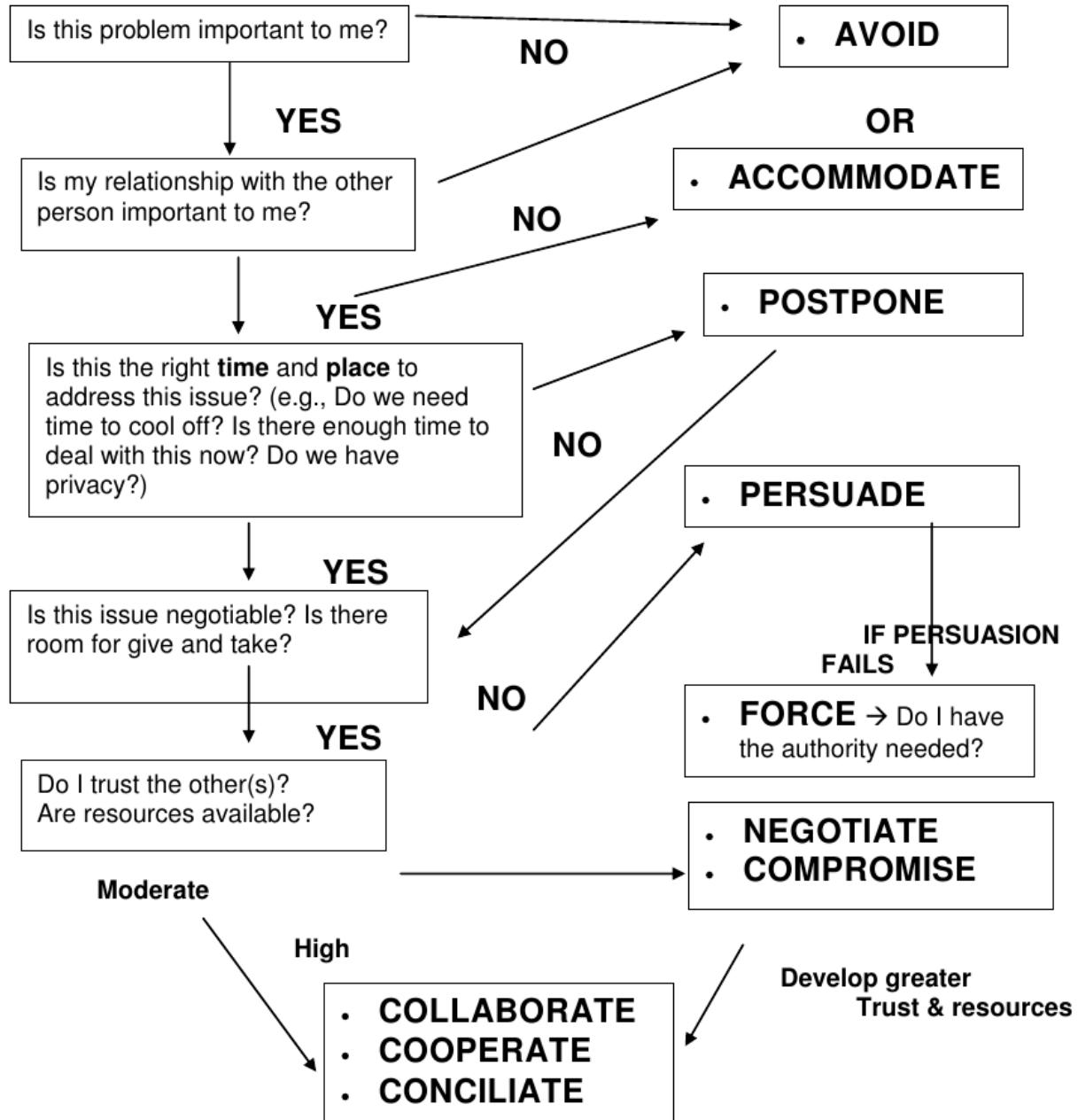
Even if a mutually satisfactory agreement is not reached, a better understanding of the situation results and the relationship is strengthened. Collaboration works best when:

- The issue involved is negotiable
- The parties have some level of trust
- The parties demonstrate respect for each other’s feelings
- There is enough time available to address the issues

Taken from: “Conflict Resolution Workshop” – Developed by: Judicial Process Commission
Conciliation Task force; Rochester, NY (September 1998)
Offered for use in the spirit of peacemaking

CONFLICT RESPONSES FLOW CHART

When is each conflict response most effective?



Adapted 2001 by Good Shepherd Mediation Program
 Based on training Materials prepared in 1988 by the NY judicial Process Commission, Conciliation TaskForce, Rochester, NY, that were offered in the spirit of peacemaking