# Creating the Best Possible Work Environment (Part II)

December 15, 2020

*What Do You Hope to Gain?*

## Lindsey Zajac

- Bachelor's Degree from Providence College
- 15 year career in Corporate Recruiting & Human Resources
- Advanced Certified Leadership Coach
- Executive Leadership Certificate from Cornell
- Authorized Everything DiSC partner
- Ahern, Murphy & Associates was founded in 1998 and has worked with over 120 clients across 32 verticals

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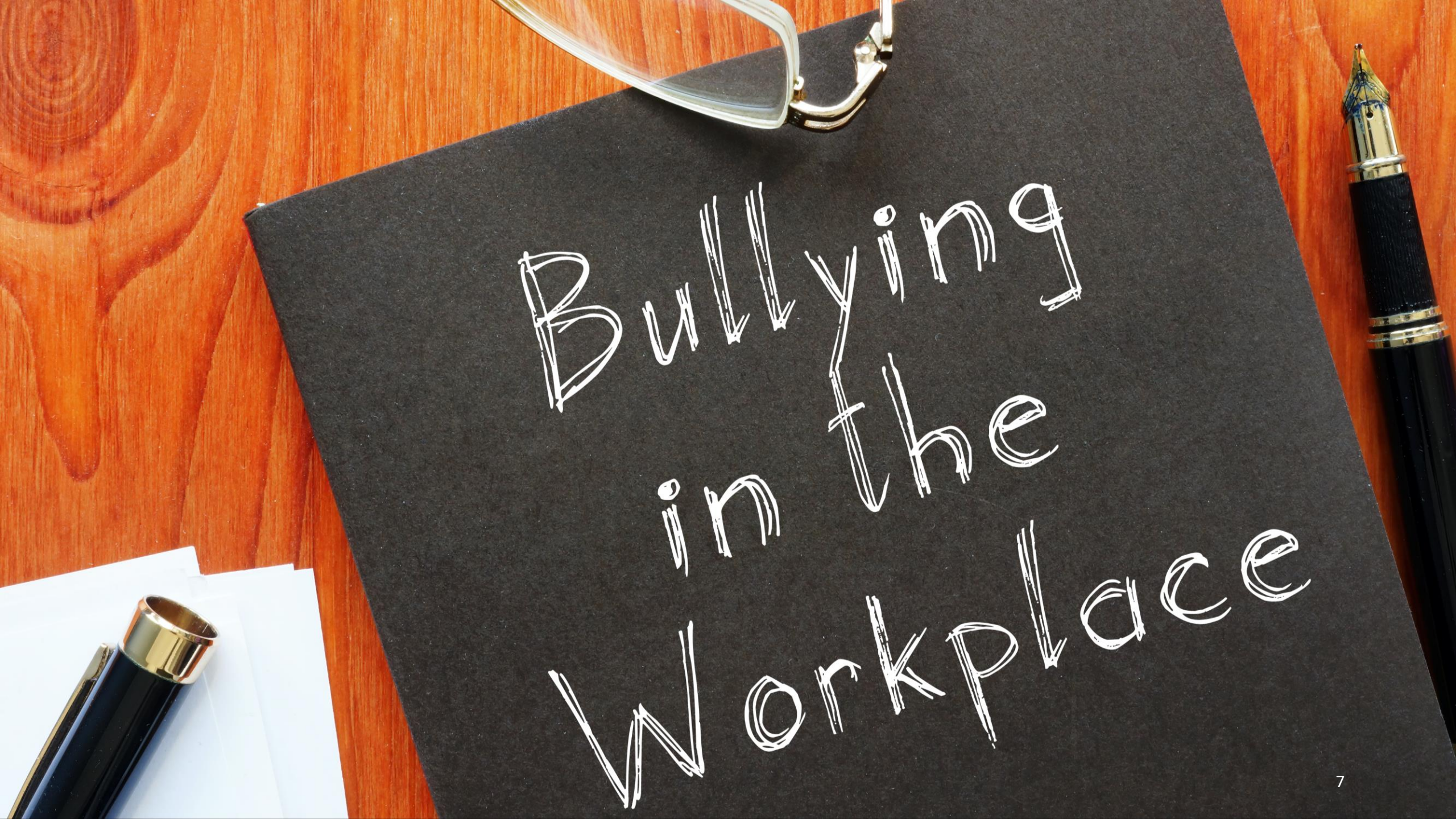Everyone Plays a Role in Creating a Positive Work Environment

# Session I Recap:

- Mission and Values at Skidmore College
- Why Civility in the Workplace Matters
- What Respecting and Disrespecting Each Other Looks Like
- Diversity & Inclusion at Skidmore
- How Respect, Diversity and Inclusion Fosters a More Civil Workplace
- Equal Employment Opportunity, Workplace Violence, and Retaliation policies and procedures
- Envision the Best Possible Work Environment
- **Applications for Me & Priority Matrix**

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| DO MORE OF... | START DOING |
|---|---|
| | |

| DO LESS OF... | STOP DOING |
|---|---|
| | |

# Review, Revise, Refocus

# Definition of Workplace Bullying

- Repeated, health-harming mistreatment of one or more persons (the targets) by one or more perpetrators. It is abusive conduct that is:
  - Threatening, humiliating or intimidating, or
  - Work interference– sabotage– which prevents work from getting done, or
  - Verbal abuse
- *It is the deliberate, hurtful, repeated mistreatment of employees driven by a desire to control.*

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Hostile glares and other intimidating gestures do not equate to workplace bullying.

# True or False?

# Workplace Bullying continued

- Negative acts directed toward employees. To include:
  - Intimidating or undermining employees by demeaning their work standards, not giving them credit, setting them up for failure and constantly reminding them of old mistakes
  - Threatening employees' personal self-esteem and work status
  - Isolating employees from opportunities, information and interaction with others
  - Giving impossible deadlines, creating undue pressure and stress

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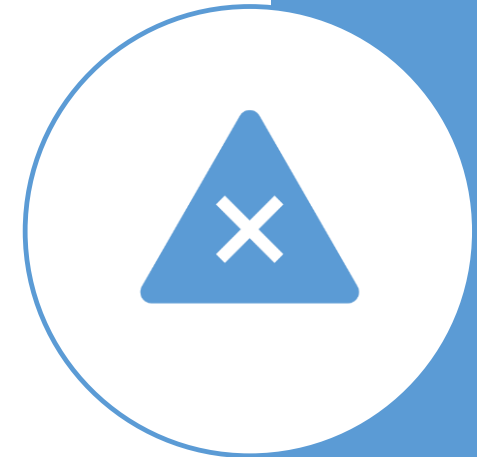
# Forms of bullying behavior

- Constant and unfair criticism
- Excluding or isolating someone socially
- Insults and behind-the-back put-downs
- Hostile glares and other intimidating gestures
- Malicious gossiping
- Monopolizing supplies and other resources
- Aggressive e-mails or notes

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# Reasons to Confront and Stop Workplace Bullying

- Employees can suffer from significant physical and emotional problems, including anxiety, depression, gastrointestinal disorders, headaches, insomnia, cardiovascular disease, poor concentration, substance abuse and lowered self-esteem.

- Turnover costs, higher health care costs, low productivity, absenteeism, low morale and retaliation that may reach levels of aggressive and violent behavior

# A Simple, Quick Test- Ask Yourself...

- Would I want someone to speak like this to my spouse, my child, my mother/father?

- Would I want someone to treat my spouse, my child, my mother/father like this?

- Would I behave this way in front of my children or grandchildren?

- Would I do this in front of my Manager/HR?

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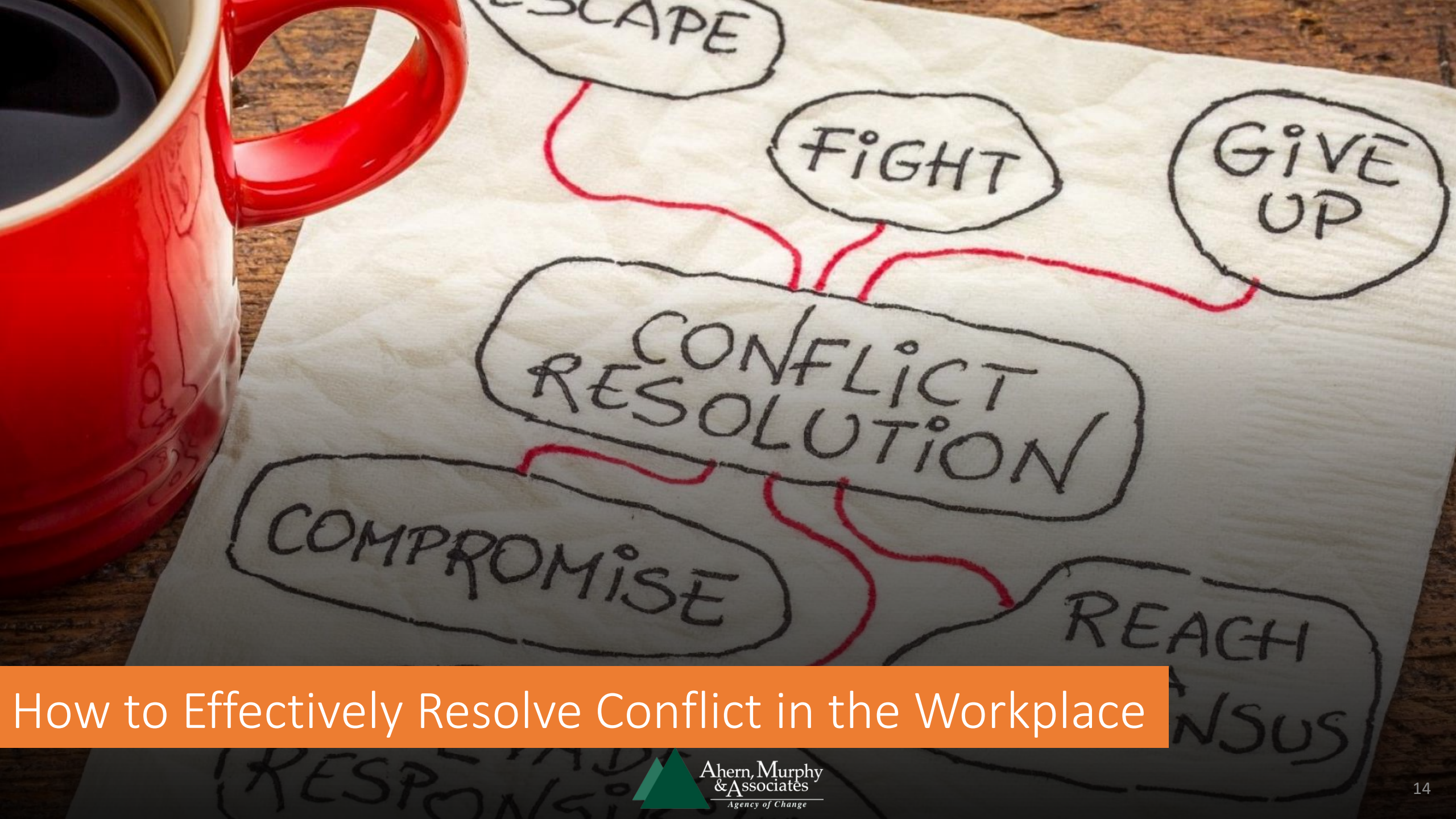
How to Effectively Resolve Conflict in the Workplace

# Why Is This Important?

- Mitigating and Effectively Resolving Conflict are Critical Components to Creating a More Positive Work Environment

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# AGENDA

Causes and Impact of Workplace Conflict

Four Types of Workplace Conflict

Five Methods of Resolving Conflict

The Fundamentals of a Crucial Conversation

When and How to Engage in a Crucial Conversation

Q&A

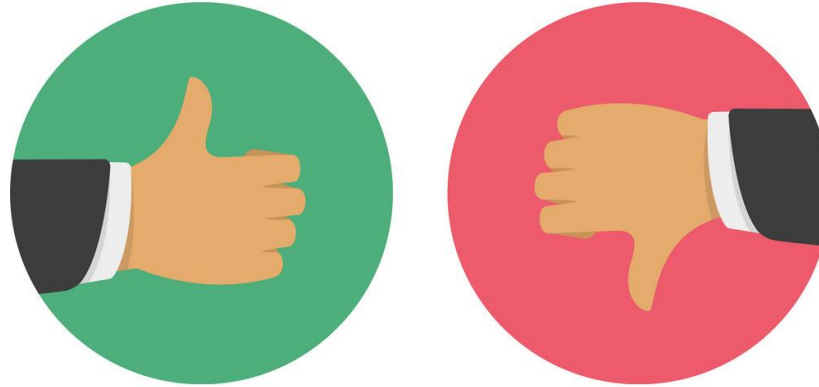Ahern, Murphy & Associates
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# True or False?

-Workplace conflict is any serious workplace disagreement that stops the flow of work.

# What is conflict management?

-Conflict Management is the practice of recognizing and dealing with disputes in a rational, balanced and effective way.

# Facts on Workplace Conflict

**Healthy conflict:**

- Disagreements communicated in a supportive environment that foster the generation of new ideas or ways to problem-solve.
- Tension that increases awareness or sheds light on a growing workplace problem/issue.

**Damaging conflict:**

- Name calling.
- Personal attacks.
- Employees becoming silent, withdrawn and/or afraid to speak up.
- Cliques, gossip and rumors.
- Lack of mutual respect.

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*(Source: SHRM Relationship Management 2018)*

# the Cost of
# Workplace Conflict

## 85%
of employees have conflict at work

**1/3** of a managers' time is spent dealing with employee discord and hostility

WE'RE HIRING
**50%** staff turnover as a result of animosity

**$125K** average cost in legal fees when conflict cases go to court

**25%** of staff are absent or sick due to disputes

# True or False?

- "359 billion in paid hours or the equivalent of 385 million working hours are lost in the US each year to workplace conflict."

*-Workplace Conflict and How Business Can Harness It to Thrive, CPP Global Research, 2008*

# For conflict to have any positive outcomes…

- Understand the common causes of conflict
- Learn the skills to proactively address problems
- Leverage all five methods to resolving conflict
- Engage in crucial conversations

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## CAUSES OF CONFLICT:

-Look for blame instead of solutions
-Receive inadequate training
-Have poor emotional regulation skills
-Have different perspectives
-Elevate personal agendas
-Have different priorities, goals or timelines
-Communicate differently
-Spend large amounts of time together
-Depend on one another to "get the job done"
-Have expectations that are not communicated and/or met

# The Impact Conflict

- Employees not involved in the conflict either "pile on" or withdraw from the conflict.

- Employees may take sides or "check out" from work.

- Morale and productivity are lowered due to the conflict.

- Employees who work in groups or teams are now divided because of the conflict.

*(Source: SHRM Relationship Management 2018)*

# The Impact of Letting Conflict Fester

- Work related conflict has now evolved to personal conflict
- Work can slow dramatically or halt altogether.
- Employees may lash out and become violent towards each other.
- The company may face legal risks associated with hostile situations in the workplace.
- Damage to reputation.

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# Steps to Analyze a Specific Conflict
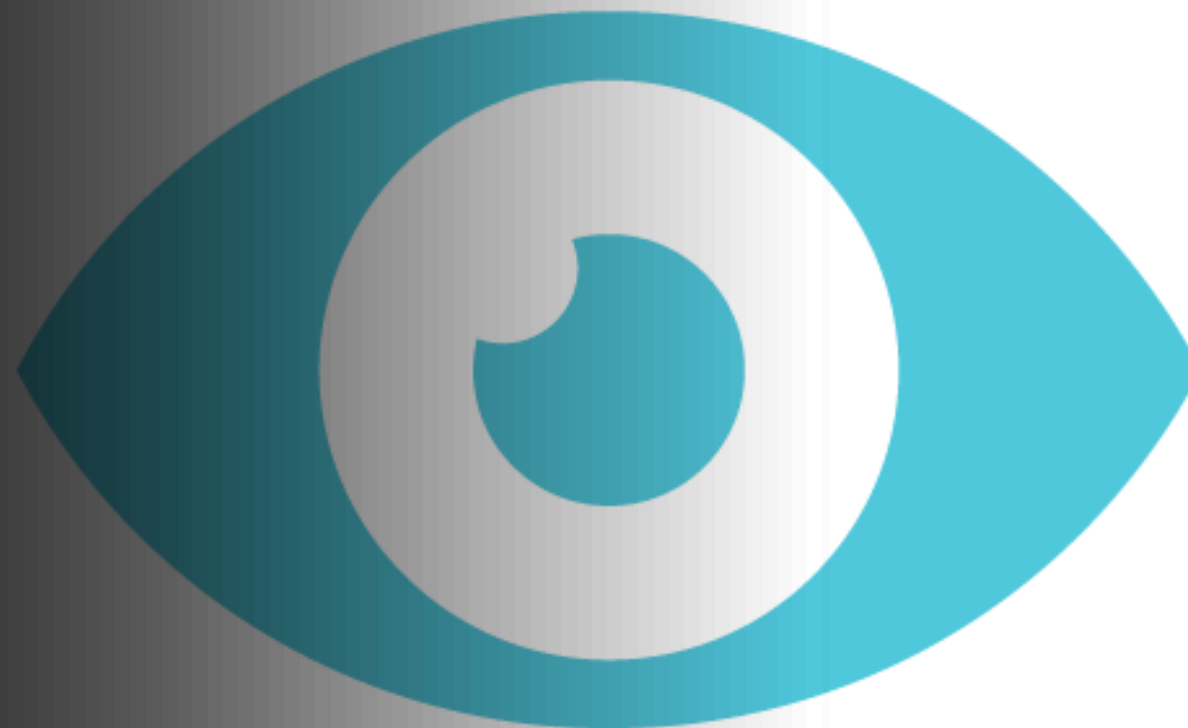
# Buy Yourself Some Time

- Walk away.
- Ask for a break.
- Don't hit send.

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# Steps to Analyze a Specific Conflict

1. _**Understand your counterpart**_

2. Identify the type of conflict

3. Determine your goal

4. Pick your method of resolution

5. Prepare for a Crucial Conversation

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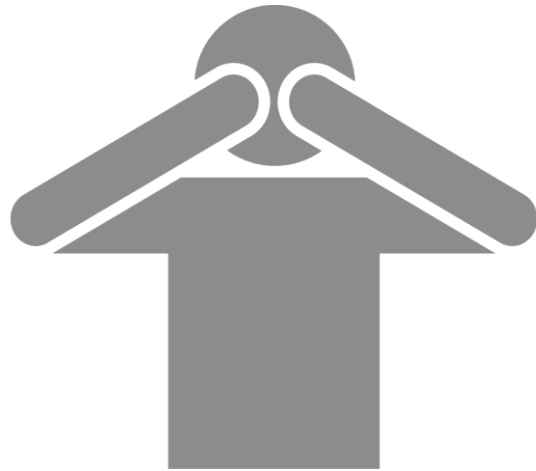_Agency of Change_

# Two Approaches to Conflict
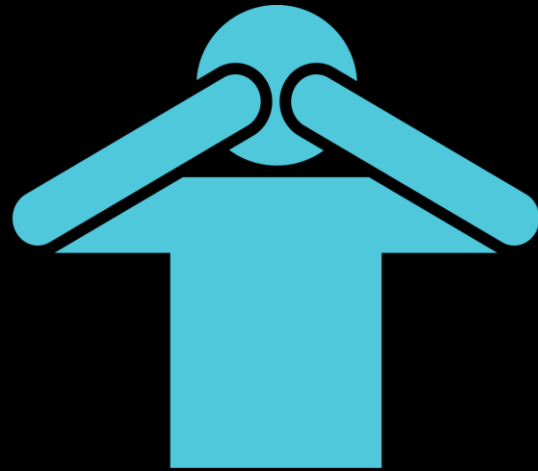
**AVOIDERS**

**SEEKERS**

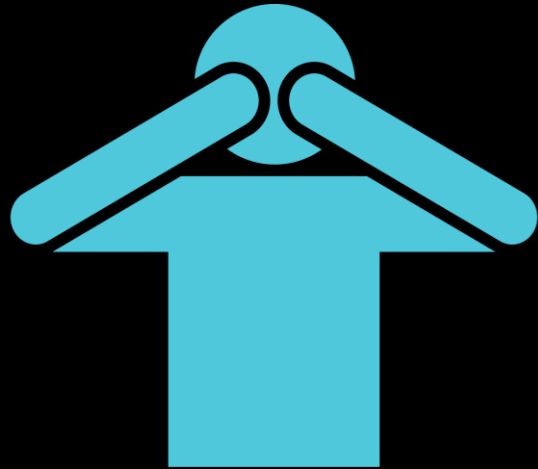# Two Approaches to Conflict



**AVOIDERS**

**SEEKERS**

# Two Approaches to Conflict

**AVOIDERS**

**SEEKERS**

# Determine Your Style

*Are you an avoider or a seeker?*

# Steps to Analyze a Specific Conflict

1. Understand your counterpart

2. ***Identify the type of conflict***

3. Determine your goal

4. Pick your method of resolution

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# Four Types of Conflict

## 1. Relationship

# Four Types of Conflict

## 2. Task

# Four Types of Conflict

## 3. Process

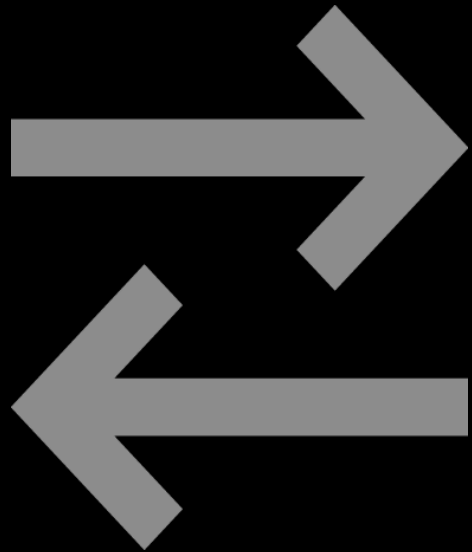# Four Types of Conflict

## 4. Status

# Four Types
of Conflict

*Conflicts rarely
fall into one
category.

# Exercise
## Identify the Type of Conflict:
## Scenario 1

- *The functional leaders at a tech company all agree that one of their best-performing products needs a new feature, but they can't agree on how to measure its success. Marketing sees it as an opportunity to expand the company's market share. Finance is focused on improving the business's margins. And the engineers on the team care about developing something cool that integrates the latest technology.*

- *What type of conflict is this?*

# Exercise
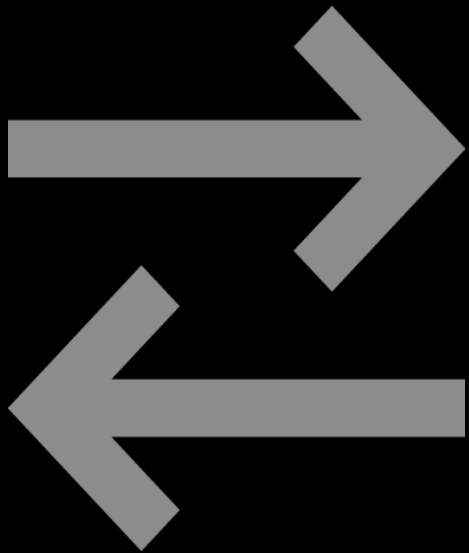## Identify the Type of Conflict:
## Scenario 2
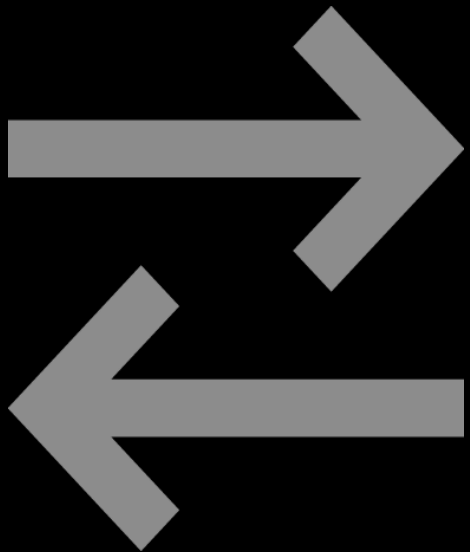
- *Marketing is at odds with the engineers because they think they should conduct customer focus groups throughout the course of development, starting as soon as possible, while the engineers think they should wait until they have an internally approved prototype.*

- *What type of conflict is this?*

# Exercise
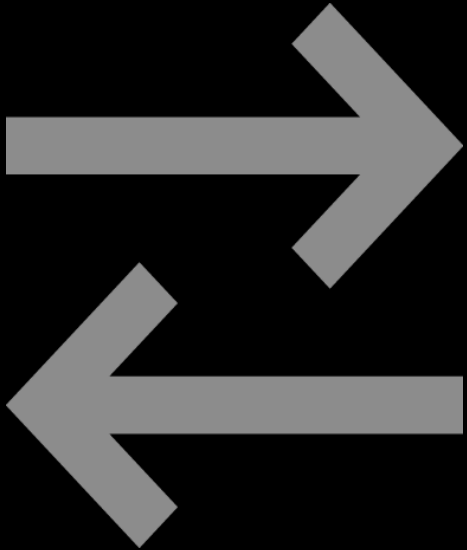## Identify the Type of Conflict: Scenario 3



- *The SVP of engineering and the SVP of new product development are going head to head over which one of them should lead the group that is designing the new feature.*

- *What type of conflict is this?*

# Exercise
## Identify the Type of Conflict:
### Scenario 4

- *The SVP of product development and the SVP of engineering can't agree on the ultimate goal of the new feature, and their differing views gradually escalate from lively debate to a public blowout. Now they trade passive-aggressive jabs over group e-mails and interrupt each other in meetings. It's no longer about what's best for the company and the customer. For both of them, it's about being right.*

- *What type of conflict is this?*

# Steps to Analyze a Specific Conflict

1. Understand your counterpart

2. Identify the type of conflict

3. ***Determine your goal***

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# Conflict Resolution Strategies

**Low to High Concern for Other**

**Low to High Concern for Self**

| Competing | Collaborating |
|-----------|---------------|

**Compromising**

| Avoiding | Accommodating |
|----------|---------------|

*(Source: Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument)*

# Competing

The competing method is used primarily for:

- Situations that involve quick action
- Situations where there is no compromise or debate
- Situations requiring the need to make hard or unpopular decisions

When to use this style:

- Violation of company handbook or code of conduct
- Threatening behavior (verbal threats & body language)
- Bullying, sexual harassment, physical violence of any kind

# Collaborating

The collaborating method is used primarily for:

- Gaining support from the team.

- Using the different perspectives as an opportunity to learn.

- Improving relationships through collaboration.

When to use this style:

- Argumentative or uncooperative behavior

- Difficult team dynamics

- Decline in team performance

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# Compromising

This method is used primarily for:

- Resolving issues of moderate to high importance.
- Finding a solution that involves equal power and strong commitment on both sides.
- Situations needing a temporary fix.
- Backing up a decision that was made using the competing or collaboration methods.

When to use this style:

- Labor relations
- Business negotiations

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# Avoiding

The avoiding method is used primarily for:
- Unimportant or non-work-related issues.
- Buying time until a resolution can be reached.
- Recognizing issues as symptoms.

When to use this style:
- Petty personal issues amongst employees
- Disagreements over unimportant work matters
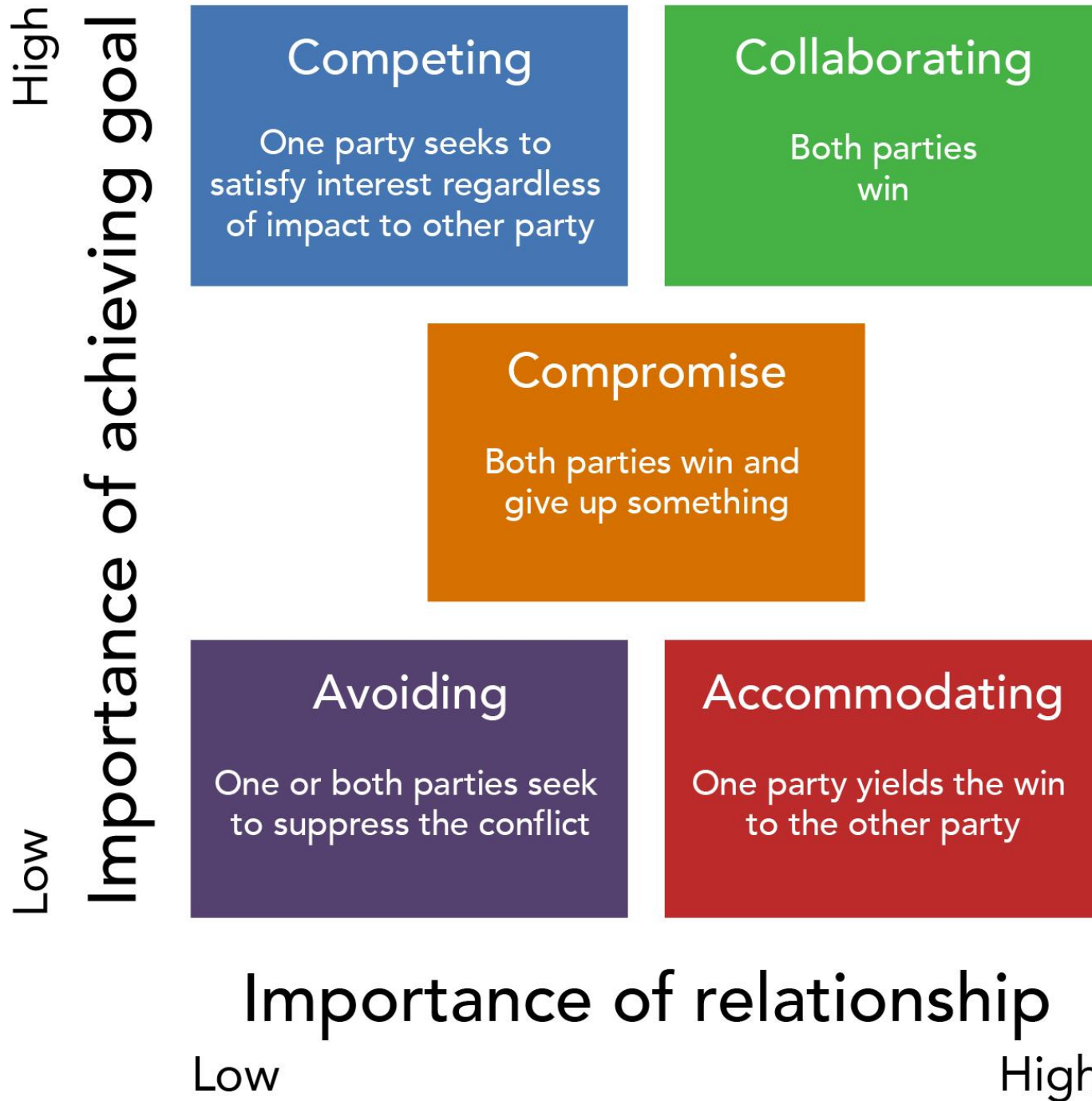- Employees with strongly opposing political views

# Accommodating

The accommodating method is used primarily for:

- Maintaining perspective in a conflict situation.

- Making active decisions on what can be "let go" vs. what needs another method.

- Keeping the peace and creating goodwill.

When to use this style:

- Non-important work matters

- Personal situations

# How Would You Resolve These Conflicts?

1. Tracy isn't pulling her weight around here and is creating more work for all of us.

2. Tony was overheard shouting at Scott, "Let's take this outside and see how tough you really are!"

3. A heated argument broke out in the office amongst two employees very different political views.

4. Abby was just promoted into a leadership role that James also interviewed for. James is upset and feels overlooked.

5. Mario thought Pete was submitting the proposal by the deadline and Pete thought Marion was responsible for that. They missed the deadline and the proposal is now late.

# Steps to Analyze a Specific Conflict

1. Understand your counterpart

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5. ***Prepare for a Crucial Conversation***

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# What does using the Crucial Conversation Model teach?

**1** Speak persuasively, not abrasively

**2** Foster teamwork and better decision making

**3** Build acceptance rather than resistance

**4** Resolve individual and group disagreements

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# Main Lessons

| Lesson 1 | Stick to your goals during the discussion so you don't get overly emotional |
| --- | --- |
| Lesson 2 | Listen to the other person's opinions to help them feel safe in the conversation (AMPP- Ask, Mirror, Paraphrase, Prime) |
| Lesson 2 | Use the STATE acronym to resolve a conflict (Share, Tell, Ask, Talk, Encourage) |

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# Use the STATE Method to resolve conflict

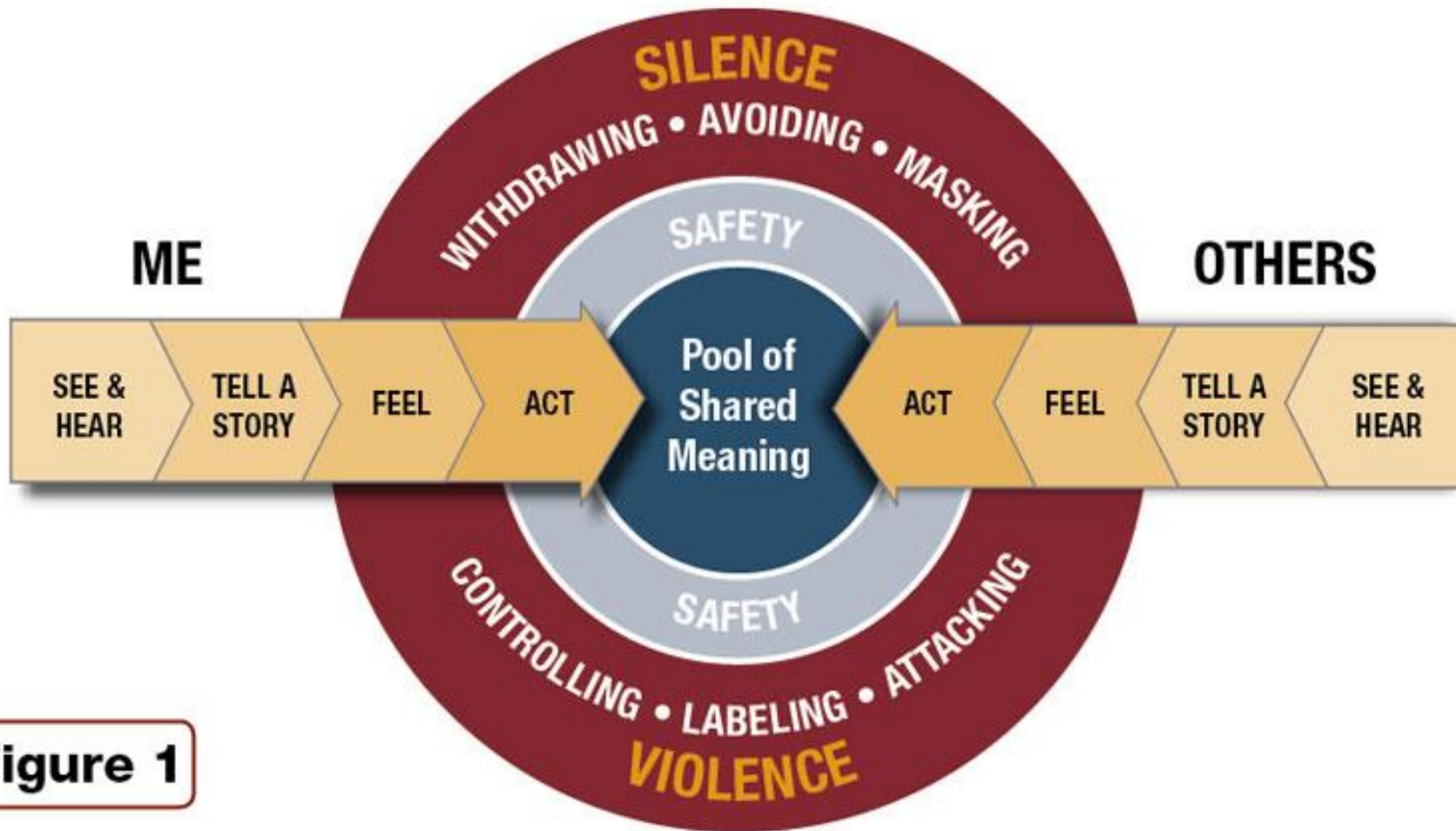| | |
|---|---|
| **Share** | Share the facts |
| **Tell** | Tell your story |
| **Ask** | Ask for the other's story |
| **Talk** | Talk tentatively |
| **Encourage** | Encourage testing |

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Figure 1

# Plan and Prepare for the Conversation

- Mentally
- Strategically
- Logistically

# Mentally Prepare for the Conversation

- Check your mind-set
- Take your counterpart's perspective
- Vent if you need to

# Strategically Prepare for the Conversation

- Plan your message
- Prepare for multiple scenarios

# Logistically Prepare for the Conversation

- Choose the right time and place

# Have a Productive Conversation

✓ Use the STATE Method

✓ Manage your emotions

✓ Listen to the other perspective

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# Sample Conversation

**1. Focus on what you have in common:**

*"It feels like we agree on the same goal here—to bring in revenue from this new product as soon as possible."*

**2. Label the type of conflict:**

*"Our conflict seems to be more about how we do it—the timing of how quickly we launch the product and whether we release it in target markets first."*

**3. Make clear your intention** to work the issue out collaboratively:

*"I want to put our disagreements on the table because success is going to depend on us working well together."*

**4. Ask your counterpart for advice** on how to resolve the disagreement.

*"I welcome your advice on how we can work this through together?"*

# Do's of Resolving Conflict

**<u>Do:</u>**

- ✓ Understand that conflicts are inevitable

- ✓ Resolve to address conflict quickly

- ✓ Focus on the issue, roles, and goals, not the people

- ✓ Be open to solutions

- ✓ Acknowledge how members are feeling

- ✓ Listen actively

*(Source: SHRM Relationship Management 2018)*

# Don't's of Resolving Conflict

## Don't:

- ✓ Focus on personality traits that cannot be changed

- ✓ Interrupt people

- ✓ Attack anyone, present or absent

- ✓ Reprimand anyone publicly

- ✓ Disregard the feelings of team members

- ✓ Don't take sides - instead, make decisions

- ✓ Ignore the conflict

- ✓ Allow emotions to take over the conversation

- ✓ Impose personal values, beliefs, or agendas

*(Source: SHRM Relationship Management 2018)*

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# Recap of Steps to Analyze a Specific Conflict

1. Understand your counterpart

2. Identify the type of conflict

3. Determine your goal

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# Conflict Prevention Tips

-Build good communication skills & relationships before conflict occurs
-Don't let small problems escalate
-Respect differences
-Be open to other perspectives
-Acknowledge feelings
-Focus on solving problems not changing people
-Adapt your style to the situation and people involved
-Partner with a threat assessment team

What can you commit to going forward?

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| DO MORE OF… | START DOING |
|---|---|
|  |  |

| DO LESS OF… | STOP DOING |
|---|---|
|  |  |

**Review, Revise, Refocus**

# Q&A

# Thank you for *your time!*

For more information on the coaching, trainings, or workshops that Ahern, Murphy & Associates provides:

- Visit our website-**www.ahernmurphy.com**



- Contact me directly- **Lindsey@ahernmurphy.com**
  **(315) 382-8888**