Conflict and conflict mediation at work

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Today

1. Conflict in organizations: destructive?
2. Perspectives on conflict & mediation
3. Task, Relation and Process conflicts
4. Hierarchical conflicts & Leadership
5. Conflict in the team
6. Peacemaking
7. Managerial third party behavior
8. Mediation by third parties
9. Mediation in top team conflicts

Primates learn doctors how to solve conflicts.

The art of reconciliation.

11/17/13
7-I model of conflict analysis

- What is the conflict about? (Issues)
- What parties are involved? (Individuals)
- What is the relation of parties? (Interdependence)
- How do parties interact? (Interaction)
- What are the implications? (Implications)
- What is the context? (Institutions)
- What regulation mechanisms? (Interventions)

Conflict in the context

Structural aspects of conflict

Approach

- Compromising
- Integrating

Understanding

Interests/limited resources

Ideology (Vision; Goals)

Strategy

Identity
**Individuals**

**Personality promoting conflict**
- Conflict prone personality
- Social – Value orientation
- Neuroticism & Dogmatism
- Narcistic personality

**Interdependence**
- The amount of interdependence (how strongly linked)
- The type of interdependence
  - GOAL: competitive/cooperative/mixed
  - WORK: serial/time/quality
- Differences in interdependence (power)

**Sources of Power**
- Formal position
- Information & Access to information network
- Survival value
- Replacement
- Skills
- Reference (charisma)
- Reputation
- Personal characteristics

**Strategies of Empowerment (C3)**
- Structural
  - Changes in interdependence
  - Separation
  - Participation (in decision making)
- Personal
  - Cognitions
    - Therapy/coaching/peer support to raise self-awareness and personal image
  - Competencies
    - Training & coaching to develop competencies
    - Coaching to develop self-efficacy

**Institutions**
- Conflict imbedded in organization: organized competition
- Complexity
- Hierarchical levels & coordination
- Role unclarity/role conflicts
- Shared Culture & Values
- Change(s!)
- Working conditions/labor relations

**Role theory**
- Different roles
- Scripts for role behavior
- Role sender(s); expectations
- Own role perception
- Conflicting roles (internal), identity, competencies
- Conflicting expectations (between senders)
- Conflicts between sender and self
- Role (un)clarity
- Role negotiations
Role theory

Interventions

- Existing Norms
- Rules and Procedures
- Available Third Parties
  - within the system (formal & informal)
  - outside the system (e.g., unions, court)

Process aspects of conflict

- What is the strategy of the parties?
- What tactics do they use?
- How do they respond to each other?
- What changes in behavior did take place?

Interaction

- What is the history of this conflict?
- Who has done what?
- What were the critical incidents?
- When did the conflict escalate?

Implications

- What are the effects of the behavior and interaction of the parties?
  - For the development of the conflict (Issues, parties)
    - What is the level of escalation?
    - What are the outcomes?
- For the individual parties
- For their relation (short and long term)
- For the system/their environment
  - Do (some) parties benefit from the conflict?

Escalation

Three stages in conflict:
- Escalation: can get on at different levels (tendency to become worse)
- Stalemate: situation where further escalation is too costly for both parties
- Settlement: ripeness of the conflict; parties become authentic ready to constructively solve the conflict
What is essential to know in conflict diagnosis?

What do you ask a friend who is telling you his conflict?

What do you ask yourself when you face a conflict?

What are for you the most important questions?

How to diagnose?

The art of questioning.

Steps in diagnosis:
- rapport
- unfreezing or blowing of steam?
- what (implicit) social contract do we have?
- open or directive questions?
- (implicit) diagnostic models we use

The key questions to diagnose perspective of one party

Goals

Strategy

Done so far?

Reality checks

Four questions
- What do you really want?
- Is this realistic?
- What is needed to get there?
- What have you done so far, and what can you do from here?
Role theory

- Different roles
- Scripts for role behaviors
- Expectations of role senders
- Own role prescriptions
- Conflicting roles (internal), identity, competences
- Role conflicts
  - Conflicting expectations (between senders)
  - Conflict between self and senders
- Role overload
- Role unclarity

Role theory: interventions

Individual
- Role clarification
- Role separation
- Role reduction/rejection
- Negotiate role prescriptions (solution focused)
- Appreciation (cognitive/emotionally focused)
- Competence development

Social: Team/group
- Role clarification
- Role negotiations with role senders
- Role negotiations between role senders

Organisation
- Role descriptions and clarification
- Reduction internal role conflicts
- Competence-development / management development

Team Effectiveness Model (Dyer)

- Mission
- Goals
- Roles/tasks
- Procedures
- Interpersonal relations
- Environment

Teams Conflict Model

- Mission
- Goals
- Roles/tasks
- Procedures
- Interpersonal relations
- Environment

Stages in Group Development

1. Forming: inclusion and dependency (do I want to be part of this group? Am I accepted?)
2. Storming: open conflict and counterdependence ('kill the leader!')
3. Norming: development of productive norms, rules, role clarity
4. Performing: productive teamwork
5. Adjourning: continuance of the team?

Conflict Issues differ in each stage

1. Forming: who can be part of this group? What are the goals and what do we want to be?
2. Storming: leadership, who sets the norms?
3. Norming: who takes up what roles, how do we communicate? Standards for performance?
4. Performing: innovate? New challenges?
5. Adjourning: who continues?

Conflict Behavior differs in each stage

1. Forming: friendly, covert
2. Storming: open, indirect, coalitions
3. Norming: open discussions and compromising
4. Performing: solution oriented, shared
5. Adjourning: avoiding
1   Realistic Conflict Theory
Conflict explained from real conflicts on interest
- Groups have aspirations and claims on the same limited resources
- Comparison with other groups: 'they don't deserve to be better off!'
- Legitimation to fight the perceived injustices

2   Social Identity Theory
- Identity is a personal and social construction
- Group identity can be created and strengthened by both internal and external dynamics
- We are often shifting from one identity to another
- Creating multi-identities helps to cross group borders
- Boundary spanners are members of two (rivaling) groups, creating bridges
- Formalize this role (for example in politics)

2   Social Identity Theory
- Social identities are created easily
- Animal Party
- Fight for animal rights

5   Interventions Preventive
- Create bridges
- Prevent weak ties
- Enforce boundary spanners

6   Interventions Preventive/Curative
- Promote cooperation and open dialogue
- Create superordinate goals
- First focus on structural changes (situational/ legal), more than cognitive/emotional change

6   Interventions Curative
- Cognitive (challenge negative stereotyping):
  - Perspective change, role reversal
  - Create common goals & common success
  - Problem-solving workshops