

CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR TOUGH CUSTOMERS

Central Pennsylvania Food Bank
Annual Agency Appreciation Conference
September 14, 2012
Judy Chambers
Extension Educator



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Objectives

- Define conflict and identify common causes
- Use knowledge of the Conflict Cycle to identify appropriate response to a conflict
- Identify methods to manage individual conflicts and group conflicts
- Understand the differences between conflict management and resolution

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What is Conflict?

- Competing interests or goals
- Different ways to reach goals
- Incomplete understanding of or hidden personal values and feelings
- Difference of opinion



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Sources of Conflict

- Lack of information
- Poor communication
- Lack of leadership or decision-making
- Low performance
- Differences in role expectations
- Unresolved prior conflict

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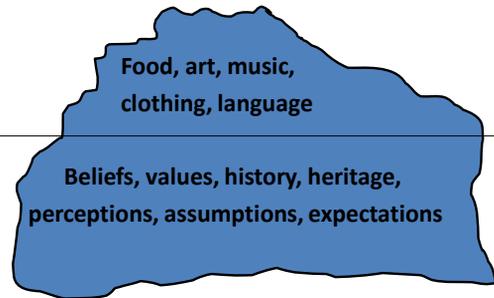
We're each built differently

- Power or status differences
- Reaction to change
- Differing values
- Cultural differences



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Culture is like an iceberg



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We can't always see cultural conflict

The diagram shows two overlapping, irregular shapes representing value systems. The left shape is light blue and labeled 'My value system' with an arrow pointing right. The right shape is light green and labeled 'Your value system' with an arrow pointing left. In the overlapping area, there is a yellow and red starburst explosion. Below the diagram is a blue bar with the text 'Penn State Extension'.

Conflict is natural . . . and can be healthy

- Recognizes our differences
- Avoids "group think"
- Supports authentic dialogue
- Provides opportunity to grow

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The Conflict Cycle

The diagram is a circular flow with five stages in grey boxes: 'Tension Development' at the top, 'Role Dilemma' on the right, 'Injustice Collecting' at the bottom, 'Confrontation' on the left, and 'Adjustments' at the top-left. White arrows connect the boxes in a clockwise cycle. Below the diagram is a blue bar with the text 'Penn State Extension'.

Intervention for tension development

- Gather and provide objective information
- Listen to all sides
- Reframe the challenge



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Intervention for role dilemma

- Learn more about complexity, values and perceptions of issue
- Build trust, emphasizing common ground
 - Recognize and acknowledge differences
 - Facilitate open, accurate discussion
 - Maintain objective perspective
 - Find common interests and goals
- Separate myths, facts, values

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Myth, Fact or Value?

- Drunk drivers account for a large amount of vehicle fatalities.
- Two cups of coffee will make you sober enough to drive.
- We need to protect our teens on the road.

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Intervention for injustice collecting

Structure the process:

- Discuss and evaluate alternative solutions
- Outline how decisions will be made, step-by-step

May be the last chance to build trust and establish common ground

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A peek at conflict management skills

- Learn tips and tools
- Practice active listening
- Examine your own role first
- Be authentic
- Know when to ask for help



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Shut up and listen

- Stop talking
- Give the person your total attention
- “Open the door”
- Reflect back; consider feelings & words
- Probe: ask for more information
- Show genuine interest
- Use “I-Messages”

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How to handle conflict at meetings

- Ignore behavior
- Interrupt, summarize, and move on
- Interrupt, own problem and ask for help
- Use a parking lot
- Use ground rules
- Confront if necessary



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Conflict Resolution

For conflict to be resolved, two conditions must be met:

- A cooperative rapport must be established between the conflicting parties, with a genuine concern for each other's needs.
- The solution found must be acceptable to *both* sides

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Tips for conflict resolution

- Begin by building a climate of mutual trust
- Define the conflict
- Examine your own behavior
- Consider using a neutral facilitator
- Outline a plan of action
- Keep efforts constructive
- Refrain from labeling positions
- Avoid "no-win" situations

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Management v. Resolution

Conflict management	Conflict resolution
Often win-lose	Must be win-win
Conflict likely to return	Conflict is over
Useful when time is short or issue is not important	Takes time but helps organization or relationship move forward

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Summary

- Conflict is inevitable – and sometimes healthy
- Identify the causes underlying the conflict
- Use knowledge of the conflict cycle to identify appropriate responses
- Learn and use skills to manage the conflict
- Understand the differences between conflict management and resolution

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Resources

- Bens, Ingrid. Facilitation at a Glance! GOAL/QPC, 1999.
- Haskell, Jane E and Louise Franck Cyr, Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills. Univ. of Maine Cooperative Extension, 2007.
- Kelsy, Dee and Pam Plumb, Great Meetings! Great Results. 2004.
- Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow, Managing Conflict. Penn State Extension, 2005
- Judy Chambers, Extension Educator chambers@psu.edu

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