

# The Value of Conflict Identification & Management Skills in Creating High Functioning Residency Teams



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FAMILY PHYSICIANS

## Our Mission Today

- Recognize the residency as “petri dish”
- Understand the origins and influences of conflict on team process and function
- Embrace a systematic approach to recognizing and addressing conflict in common residency situations.

## To Set the Stage about Team Conflict

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2ui97YPPsg>

<https://youtu.be/L2ui97YPPsg>

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## Free Association

What comes immediately to mind  
when you hear the word

# Conflict?

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# The Basics

*divergence of opinion, incompatibility, clash, strife for mastery, a hostile encounter.....*

- Why does conflict occur?
- What is a **major contributor** to the development and maintenance of conflict?
- Runs the gamut (minor irritation.....intense battle)

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## Common Misperceptions

**MYTH:** *Conflict is bad and to be avoided.*

**REALITY:**

**Conflict is a normal part of relationships.**



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# Common Misperceptions

**MYTH: *Ignore it, and it will go away.***

**REALITY:**

**Escalates because the issues go unresolved.**

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# Common Misperceptions

**MYTH: *All Conflict can be resolved.***

**REALITY: Some conflicts have no acceptable resolution to both or all parties involved.**

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# Benefits of Conflict

- **Solves** problems
- **Encourages** goal and mission re-evaluation
- **Stimulates** necessary changes in relationships and systems
- **Clarifies, builds and strengthens** relationships
- Highlight and hopefully **eliminates inequalities and injustices**

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# When Conflict Goes Unmanaged

- Consumes/**wastes** time and energy
- **Erodes** trust and mutual support
- **Breakdown** of effective communication
- **Fear, anger and vulnerability** drive decisions
- **Masks** creativity and innovation
- **Stalls or blocks** change

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## **FAMILY FEUD**

***In which category does your family fall?***



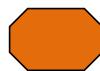
I am afraid of conflict. In my family, conflict meant yelling and fighting which usually led to heartache or bad feelings.



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## **FAMILY FEUD**

***In which category does your family fall?***



In my family, we argued for fun. Outsiders often thought we were really fighting, but it was our way of showing that we cared about each other.

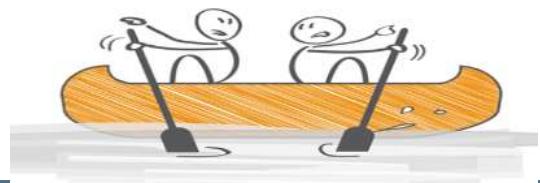


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## FAMILY FEUD

*In which category does your family fall?*

- My parents rarely raised their voices to each other. I never knew that things were not going well until they announced they were getting a divorce.

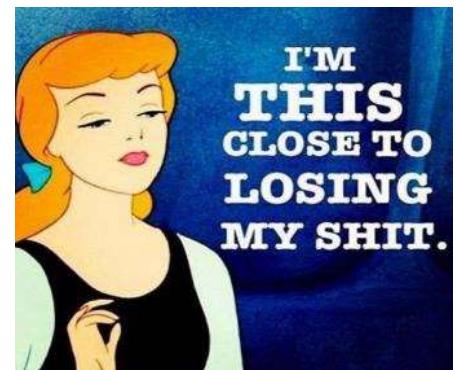


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## FAMILY FEUD

*In which category does your family fall?*

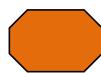
- The members of my family did not ever disagree until someone was **REALLY** angry. Then one little thing would put one or both of my parents into a screaming rage.



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## **FAMILY FEUD**

***In which category does your family fall?***

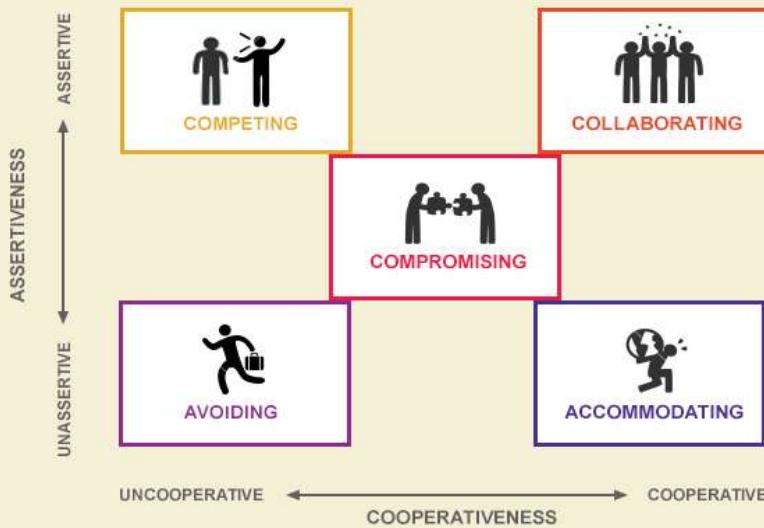


I grew up in the only non-dysfunctional family in our town. We always openly and freely discussed any issue that bothered us. Calm, respectful discussion was the norm.



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## FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO CONFLICT



#1

TKI (Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument) –  
<https://workshopbank.com/conflict-resolution-strategies>

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#2

## Two Basic Types of Conflict

*Task.....vs.....Relational*

- **Task Conflict:** arises from a difference in priorities or goals or expectations related to the task at hand.
- **Relational Conflict** arises from differences in work habits, values, communication styles & perception. Problem is power struggle, individual differences & history vs. the task at hand.

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## Flags for Relational Conflict

- The **issue** is obviously **not the real issue**
- **Irrational** or **counterproductive stands**
- **Unexplainable standoffs** occur
- Folks **sound** and **behave defensively**
- Willing to **risk entire relationship**
- If it comes up **over and over again**....

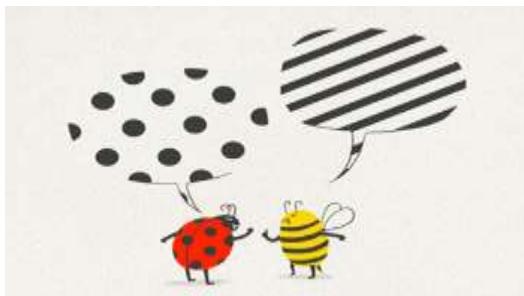
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- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Continuous Evaluative Environment
- Pressure Cooker
- Constant Change
- High ambiguity
- Need to make decisions quickly

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## 6 Steps to Help Manage Conflict



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### Step 1 to Help Manage Conflict

- Seek to understand



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## Step 2 to Help Manage Conflict

- Discuss face-to-face



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## Step 3 to Help Manage Conflict

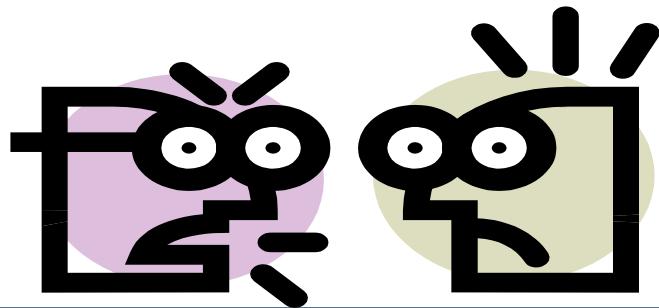
- Stick to the issues



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## Step 4 to Help Manage Conflict

- Check your emotions & attitudes



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## Step 5 to Help Manage Conflict

- Speak for yourself



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## Step 6 to Help Manage Conflict

- Use time to mutual advantage



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## Skills – Time to Exercise Them

- Seek to understand
- Discuss face-to-face
- Stick to the issues
- Check your emotions & attitudes
- Speak for yourself
- Use time to mutual advantage



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# Large Group Exercise

*some “hypothetical” situations for you to ponder.....*

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## Scenario #1

**Exercise:**

1. Gut Response - Task or Relational
2. What factors influenced your response?
3. Run through the six steps

- You have been on call for 24 hours and are expecting Matt to relieve you at 0700 – he arrives in at 0740.

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## Scenario #2

**Exercise:**

1. Gut Response - Task or Relational
2. What factors influenced your response?
3. Run through the six steps

- Mary admits one of your favorite and prized patients while on night call. You have been working for months to get his HTN and diabetes under better control with good success. She signs out that she has changed all of your patient's meds.

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## Scenario #3

**Exercise:**

1. Gut Response - Task or Relational
2. What factors influenced your response?
3. Run through the six steps

- Maude, your Practice Mgr, instructs the scheduler to double book all of your acute slots since you have a high no-show rate.

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## Scenarios #4

**Exercise:**

1. Gut Response - Task or Relational
2. What factors influenced your response?
3. Run through the six steps

- The Program Director calls you into his office to discuss information s/he has just received from the Maternity Care nurses about you.

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## Scenario #5

**Exercise:**

1. Gut Response - Task or Relational
2. What factors influenced your response?
3. Run through the six steps

- You are on the senior resident on the Fam Med inpatient service. Your spouse sends you an e-mail at work expressing a desire to sit down and talk about some troubling relationship issues (like the fact that you are never home).

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## Scenario #6

**Exercise:**

1. Gut Response - Task or Relational
2. What factors influenced your response?
3. Run through the six steps

- Your child is in her first recital – you are on call that night. An e-mail sent to resident colleagues about trading yields no offers of help.

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## Small Group Exercise

*(to also transport home to use)*

- First, make a list of examples of **task-type** conflicts and **relational-type** conflicts in your residency program (*yours or your knowledge of others*)
- Break into **small groups** (*2-4 people*)
- Share these with each other (*with the expectation of confidentiality attached*)
- **Observations?** Differences...Similarities?  
Prepare a **short report** to the larger group.

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## Leading Change Ingredients



Source: T. Knoster (1991)

SUDERMAN  
SOLUTIONS

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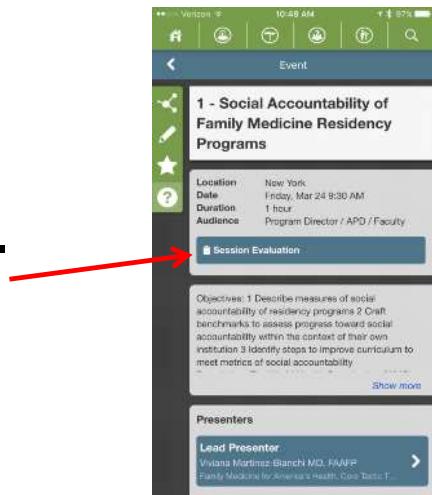
## Summary

- Residency = **petri dish**
- You bring your **family** with you
- **Task** or **relational** conflict
- **6 steps** to help you manage conflict



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Please  
complete the  
session evaluation.



Thank you.

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THANKS FOR COMING

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