

Project Leadership

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Project Leadership

Lecture 7 Leadership and Resolving Conflict

PMG 511
Master in Project Management

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Learning Outcomes

1. Definition of Conflicts.
2. Organizational Conflict Is Beneficial Or Not?
3. Definition of Conflict resolution.
4. How Leaders Effectively Manage Conflict.
5. Sources Of Project Conflict.
6. What Causes Team Conflict?
7. Conflicts Arise from Differing Needs.
8. Symptoms of Team Conflict.
9. Conflict-resolution Techniques.
10. Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.
11. Leaders' Keys To Resolving Conflict.
12. Summary and Conclusions.

Definition of Conflict

“Conflict can be seen as a gift of energy, in which neither side loses and a new dance is created.”

Thomas Crum

What is Conflict?

- **Conflict** is a natural ingredient in every organization.
- The ability to manage conflict is considered to be a **core leadership competence** and can help project teams to grow and advance. However, conflict management is one of the most difficult soft skills that someone can master and develop.



Understanding Conflict

- Conflict is normal and healthy (if managed appropriately).
- Conflict arises from differences.
- Conflict can either stimulate or hinder progress, growth, and productivity.
- Conflict that is mismanaged can derail leaders and limit their efficacy.
- Conflict can not and should not be avoided forever.
- Leaders have ways in which they prefer to handle or resolve conflict.

GOOD conflict:

- Produces new ideas.
- Solves continuous problems.
- Gives opportunity for people to expand skills
- Allows creativity, and
- Improves performance.

BAD conflict:

- Lowers team energy or morale.
- Reduces productivity.
- Prevents job accomplishment.
- Creates destructive behavior, and
- Fosters poor performance.

What is Conflict Resolution?

Conflict resolution is a daily occurrence at work that can either propel or disrupt the momentum for a leader, a team or the entire organization.

- The workplace can become a **toxic environment** when leaders allow conflict to fester rather than confront it head-on. Managing conflict can **be a tricky thing** – especially when you are not familiar with the larger **ecosystem** in which the particular individual or department creating the conflict, and how efforts to resolve conflict will reverberate throughout that ecosystem.

Leaders Effectively Can Manage Employee Conflict

An effective leader builds teams that work well together.

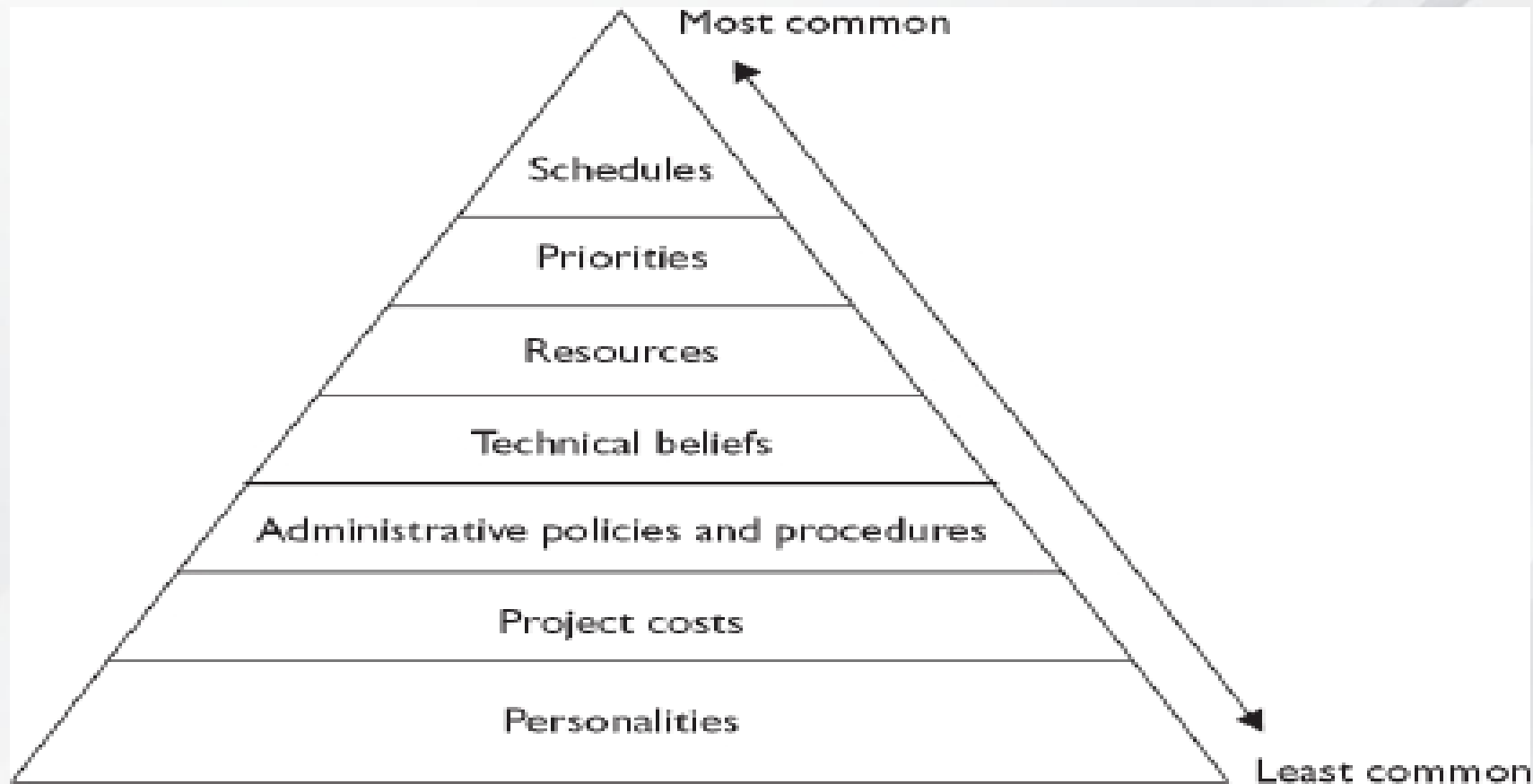
As **a leader**, he facilitate the resolution of conflicts that distract the team members, decrease productivity, destroy motivation and lead frustration and anger.



To understand team members', leaders need to differentiate between a motivational/situation model and a behavioral model of each member.

- **The behavioral model** focuses on patterns of behavior and characteristic traits that define a specific type of personality—this model is recognizing what someone does based on his or her personality.
- **The motivational / situation model** looks behind behavior to understand what are the factors that drive behavior (situation)—this model is recognizing why someone is likely to do something based on his motivational value.

- According to Thamhain and Wilemon (1975), the seven major sources of project conflict and team disagreements are (sorted by significance are)



Based on research by Thamhain and Wilemon (1975), there are seven major sources of project conflict and team disagreements are:

1. Personalities.
2. Project costs.
3. Administrative policies and procedures.
4. Technical beliefs and performance trade-offs.
5. Manpower resources.
6. Project Priorities.
7. Schedules.



In the organizational set up, there seems to be conflict among the managers, subordinates, team members and others also.

Sources of interpersonal conflict:

- **Personal differences:** Everyone is unique. Family background, culture, values and so many indicators vary from one person to another. So, conflict may arise. There exists individual difference where intelligence, ability, attitude, motivation vary from one person to others.
- **Information deficiency:** There seems to be indication of communication gap and also there seems to be indication of misinformation.
- **Role incompatibility:** This type of interpersonal conflict mainly draws from both intra-individual role conflict and inter-group conflict.

- Environmental stress: This is mainly due to stressful environmental condition. Here downsizing, competition, uncertainty.
- Besides this there exists inter-group conflict in any organizational set up. The reasons are mainly as follows:
 - Competition for resources
 - Task interdependence
 - Status struggle

What Causes Team Conflict?

- Team conflict can be caused by various factors. Some of these factors include:
- Poor communication or no communication;
- Lack of problem-solving skills or getting to “root cause”;
- Lack of clarity in purpose, goals, objectives, team & individual roles;
- Uncertainty/lack of resources and sources for help and support;
- Poor time management;
- Lack of leadership and management;
- Team members bored, not challenged, not really interested;
- Lack of skills and abilities in team members;
- Personality conflicts;
- Personal problems; and
- High turnover rates.

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- **Everyone** needs to feel understood, and supported, but the ways in which these needs are met vary widely.
- Differing needs for feeling comfortable and safe create some of the most severe challenges in our personal and professional relationships.
- It is important to acknowledge that both parties' needs to play important roles in the long-term success of team members relationships, a lack of understanding about differing needs can result in distance, arguments, and conflicts.
- Build a trust, To feel secure.

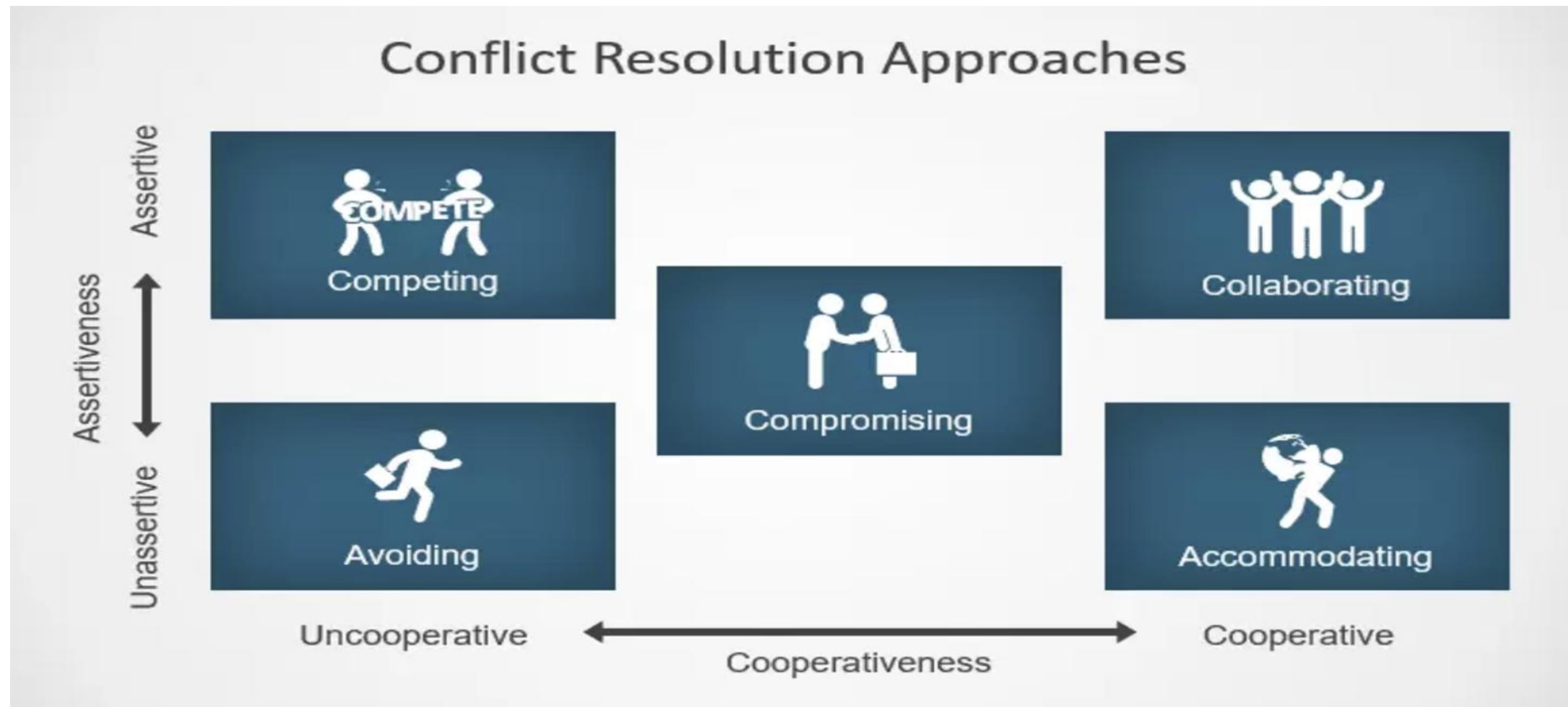
Symptoms of Team Conflict

The typical symptoms of team conflict are the following:

- Absenteeism
- Complaining
- Filing lawsuits
- Finger pointing
- Gossiping
- Hiding information that should be shared

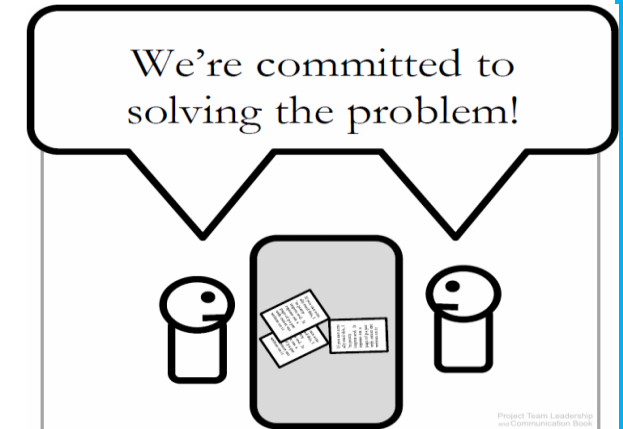
Symptoms of Team Conflict

- Not attending required meetings
- Not completing work on-time or to quality goals
- Not responding to requests for information
- Not returning phone calls or e-mails
- Passive/aggressive behavior
- Physical violence
- Verbal abuse



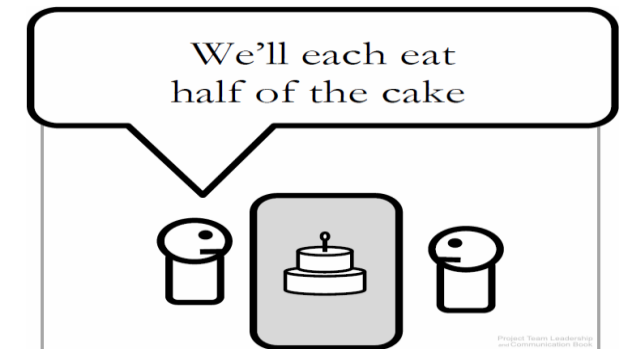
1- Confronting/Problem-solving

- The optimal solution, following a standard problem-solving process:
 1. Define the real/root problem
 2. Analyze the problem
 3. Identify solutions
 4. Choose a solution (this can be difficult)
 5. Implement a solution
 6. Review the solution, and confirm that it solved the problem and repeat if necessary
- Often takes the longest – not appropriate if deadlines are tight.



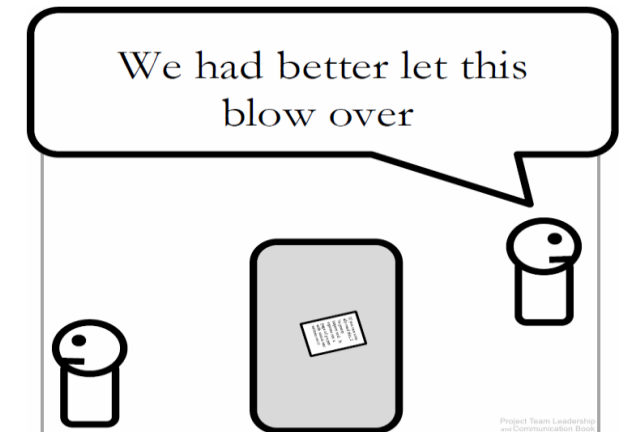
2- Compromising

- Each party makes concessions to the other, and a mutually-accepted conclusion is reached.
- Works best with issues that can be divided.
- Is often the quickest solution.
- May result in a **'lose-lose'** situation because everyone gets only a subset of what they want.



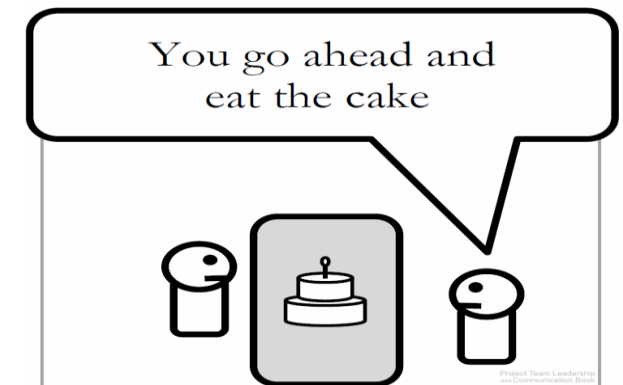
3- Withdrawal/Avoidance

- One or more parties choose to withdraw from or avoid the other to end or delay the conflict.
- Useful when debate is trivial or emotions are high.
- May be needed until an authority can intervene.
- Often doesn't directly solve the conflict.



4- Smoothing/Accommodating

- One party concedes, giving the other the ‘win’.
- Useful when the issue is clearly more important to one party or satisfying one party is important to the overall success of the project.
- Can delay conflict, as the accommodating party may change their mind and the disagreement still is in place.
- Potential for abuse of the situation is present.



5- Collaborating

- Parties work together to find a mutually-acceptable solution, often a previously-unconsidered third option.
- Considered to be an optimal solution to most conflicts.
- Takes longer than most techniques.
- If parties don't **trust** each other, collaborating is nearly imposs

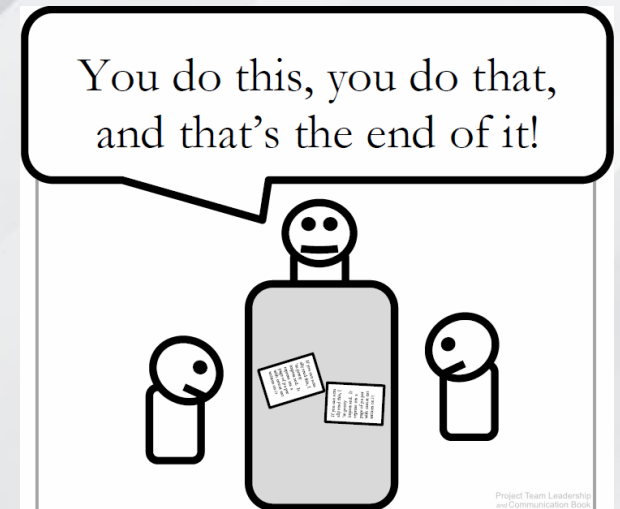


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6- Forcing

- Authority figure resolves the conflict/makes the decision, forcing all parties to end their conflict.
- Effective when the conflict is petty, unimportant, or one party's opinion is unethical.
- Often used as a last-resort.
- May not resolve the conflict, which can reappear at another time in the future.





Results
Focus

The Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument was developed by K. W. Thomas and R. H. Kilmann (1974, 2000).

According to Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument:

- **Competing/ Forcing** is a **win-lose** resolution technique.
- **Collaborating** is a **win-win** resolution technique.
- **Compromising** is a **lose-lose** resolution technique.
- **Avoiding** is a **lose-lose** resolution technique.
- **Accommodating** is a **lose-win** resolution technique.

Types of Conflict Resolutions

Whatever conflict we have, there are only three types of conflict resolutions:

Win-Win:

To reach a solution acceptable to anyone

Lose-Lose:

Everyone gets something that does not accomplish the goals

Win-Lose:

Power struggle where one party wins

Comparing the conflict strategies from the one side and the conflict resolutions from the other side, we have the following two-dimensions table:

Strategies 	Resolutions		
	Win-Win	Lose-Lose	Win-Lose
Avoiding		Both parties ignore the issue	
Competing			Only one party wins
Collaborating	Meet the needs of all involved		
Accommodating			One party meets needs of other at own expense
Compromising		Both parties give up something	

Leaders Effectively Can Manage Any Conflict

Leaders must ensure they continuously communicate with their team as well as articulate a vision.

Leaders must act responsibly to be respected.

Leadership is not a popularity contest; it is a serious responsibility that primarily involves developing and guiding the full potential in people, teams and the organization at-large.

An important part in the process of developing potential is knowing how to see conflict and when to seize the opportunity within the conflict before healthy tension turns into overly disruptive matter.

Keys To Resolving Conflict by Leaders

- **Act Responsibly.**
- A leader must act responsibly when handling conflict. If the leader is not responsible, respect for the leader may be affected.
- **Good self-control:**
- This is an important prerequisite in resolving conflicts. Though one may be highly tensed up and unwilling to listen to anybody other than having their own way during a conflict.

Keys To Resolving Conflict by Leaders

- **Patient listener:**

Another good qualification is to be a patient listener and assess the problem realistically without getting emotional or biased.

- **To have a give and take attitude:**

If you are really interested in resolving a conflict and having lasting peace, as happens a good conflict resolution strategies.

Keys To Resolving Conflict by Leaders

- **Right Timing**

Leaders who avoid conflict at all cost will find themselves regretting it later. Timing is everything when it comes to managing conflict, and the best time to take action is when there is hard evidence/proof that an employee has a track record of wrongdoing that is negatively impacting the performance of others.

- **Know Your Boundaries**

Conflict can become something much more complicated and unmanageable if you don't know the limitations and boundaries of your employees.

Keys To Resolving Conflict by Leaders

- **Respect Differences**

Rather than impose your influence, hierarchy or rank – respect the unique differences in people and learn to see things from differing points of view. Conflict resolution is rarely black and white. In fact, there are more and more grey areas.

- **Confront the Tension**

Leadership is often about doing the things that most other people don't like doing. Conflict resolution is one of those things – but as leaders we must confront the tension head-on. Don't wait, but rather activate your leadership to address the conflict before circumstances force your hand.

Keys To Resolving Conflict by Leaders

- **Identify a Goal**

The leader must be careful when addressing only one person's point of view. The leader must gather information, develop their own self-awareness, and be ready for the unexpected.

Keys To Resolving Conflict by Leaders

- **Make Conflict Resolution the Priority Rather Than Winning Or “Being Right”**
- Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than “winning” the argument, should always be your first priority.
- Focus on the present, focus on what you can do in the here and how to solve the problem.



Summary and Conclusions

- **Conflict** is a natural ingredient in every organization.
- The ability to manage conflict is considered to be a **core leadership competence** and can help project teams to grow and advance.
- The workplace can become a **toxic environment when leaders allow conflict to fester rather than confront it head-on.**
- Based on research by Thamhain and Wilemon (1975), there are seven major sources of project conflict and team disagreements.
- conflict-resolution techniques.
- Leaders' Keys To Resolving Conflict.



Thank You

