

Dealing with conflicts in science

What we wish for... and some remarks.

- Please be active and engage in discussions
- Use the „raise your hand“ tool to make moderation easier
- If possible show us your face ;-)) and turn your camera on
- If you do not understand anything please ask immediately
- **Use german** if you feel more comfortable that way!
- This presentation will be available on the website later, but due to copyright reasons without pictures, sorry!
- I am not a native speaker, please be merciful
- If you like send me feedback: ulf.kirse@uni-bielefeld.de

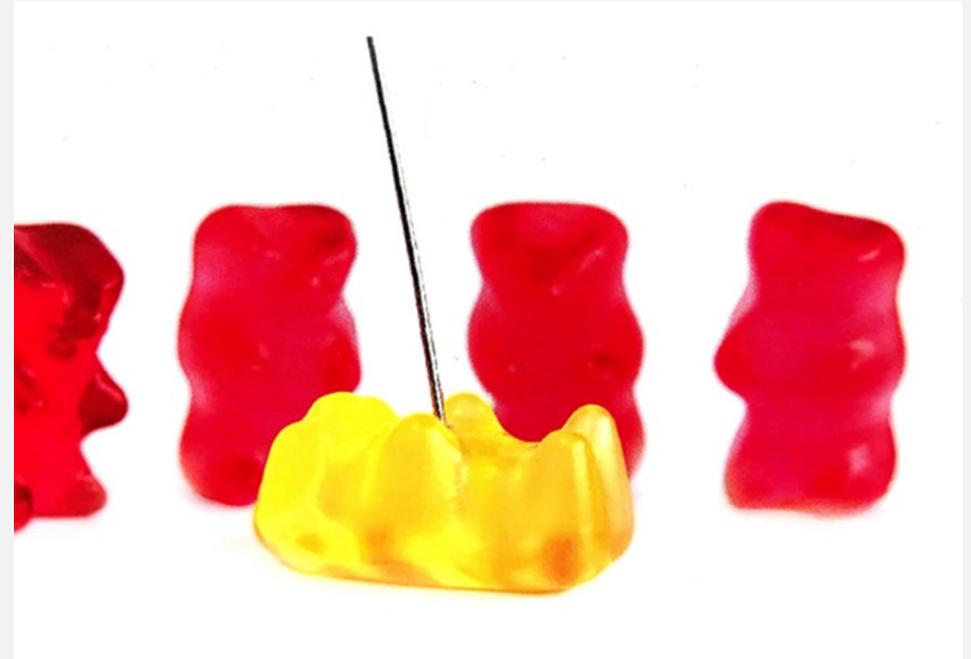


What do you wish for?

What are you hoping to get out of this session?

<https://www.menti.com/aluxzfgyrnin>

Join at menti.com and use the code: 23880576



What do you wish for?

What are you hoping to
get out of this session?

awareness

learning about methods
be part of suggestions
actionable strategy preparedness
lösungsansätze konflikte
good discussion practical tipps
eskalationen vermeiden angebotinfos
gelassener umgang
some approaches interesting input
insights into experiences
sharing your experiences

Conflicts accompany us throughout our lives

Internal conflicts are also completely normal

A Simple definition of conflict

A conflict always arises where the positions, objectives or interests of the parties involved are incompatible or at least appear to be so.

Conflicts always take place on a personal level, a factual level and a relationship level!

How do conflicts arise?

Conflicts arise where people (have to) communicate and cooperate with each other, but pursue different goals, (i.e. goals that cannot be achieved simultaneously)

Conflicts are normal!
&
Conflicts are not (yet) successful cooperation!

General causes of conflicts

- Differences in **values, goals**: e.g. conflicts between different areas of work; conflicts due to attitudes to work, due to different objectives
- **Distribution conflict** (constraints): e.g. conflict over the distribution of resources or vacation planning
- **Communication and information deficits**, e.g. incorrect information
- **Conflict-prone systems**, processes and structures, e.g. unclear tasks, unclear responsibilities
- **Problematic behavior of individuals**, e.g. unbalanced behavior, leadership behavior that creates tension (e.g. lack of appreciation, unequal treatment, etc.)

Examples of conflicts in science and research

- Authorship disputes
- Scarcity of resources
- Methodological differences
- Interdisciplinary cooperation
- Data access and use
- Time and deadline problems
- Moderation imbalances
- Communication problems
- Ethics and integrity issues
- Personal conflicts
- Recognition of achievements,
- Competition for research funding,
- Differences in project planning,
- Conflicts with external partners or the administration
- Unequal workloads
- Differences in language and culture
- ... and more

Conflict dynamics in new and established teams

Consequences of unresolved conflicts

Consequences for the research team:

- **Diminished productivity:** conflict is distracting and wastes time
- **Loss of trust:** Collaboration and information sharing are hindered
- **Delays in research:** project processes are disrupted
- **Poorer quality of work:** communication and coordination suffer
- **Poor reputation:** The reputation of the team and the institution can suffer
- **Outflow of talent:** Experienced researchers may leave the team
- **Lack of innovation:** Exchange and development of ideas are inhibited

Consequences of unresolved conflicts

Consequences for individual participants:

- **Stress and strain:** emotional strain is common and mental health can suffer.
- **Lower motivation and commitment:** work motivation decreases.
- **Poorer career opportunities:** Opportunities for collaboration and networking are impaired.
- **Poor reputation:** The reputation of researchers can suffer.

Consequences of unresolved conflicts

Conclusion:

- Unresolved conflicts can create high risks in research projects of all kinds, up to the complete failure of the project
- Unresolved conflicts generally place an emotional burden on all those involved and which can lead to health problems
- Unresolved conflicts may jeopardize the careers of those involved and damage the reputation of the organizations involved

Exercise: Arguing (1)

You are looking for a suitable location for a research retreat. There are three possibilities.

Exercise: Argue! Duration: 10 min.

VS

VS

Exercise: Arguing (2)

Brief exchange

- The players in the dispute:
 - How did you feel in the situation?
 - What did you notice about yourself and what did you notice about your opponent?
- The other participants:
 - What kind of observations were you able to make?
 - Were there any observations that concerned you personally/your own feelings?

Conflicts can also be viewed positively!

Positive effects of (resolving) conflicts, among other things:

- They strengthen team cohesion
- They point out problems and "demand" a solution
- They generate the necessary energy and the will to change
- **(Resolved) Conflicts are a normal part of cooperation!**

The Human factor

Do we all see the same thing?

What do you see?

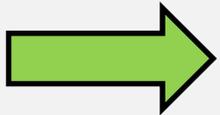
Perception

We attribute meaning to perception!

- We perceive automatically
- We select individual features
- We add missing features
- We give the perceived (known) structures
(pareidolia, clustering illusion)
- We allow ourselves to be influenced by
what has gone before (confirmation bias)

The Truth?!

- There is (almost) no "reality"/"truth" as such
- How the respective definition of "reality" turns out always depends on the context
- we perceive differently, depending on what we focus our attention on, depending on our experiences, values, goals, roles, etc.



**"My" *reality* can never be that of
the other person!**

Tunnel vision in conflicts

- **Depending on their intensity, conflicts have a massive impact on our perception and we then have blinkers (conflict goggles) on.**

Everything is interpreted in terms of conflict. We experience a form of tunnel vision.

Consequences of tunnel vision

Depending on their intensity, conflicts have a massive impact on perception and behavior

The parties to the conflict arrive at different images of reality.
Each party believes that their image is correct and that the other party is distorting reality

Consequence: Conflicts escalate!

Conflicts and stress

How do people in conflict describe their inner experience?

- emotions such as anger, frustration, annoyance or fear
- self-doubt and insecurity
- helplessness and frustration

What effects have you experienced in conflicts?

Conclusion

Escalated conflicts can be extremely emotionally stressful and have a particularly negative impact on those involved. As described, unresolved conflicts reduce job satisfaction and - at some point - work performance and sometimes even health.

Are you familiar with such phenomena and stress?

How have you dealt with them?

Ways to deal constructively with conflicts

Useful skills

- **The ability to change perspective**
- is a core competence for good cooperation
- is a strategic advantage in negotiations
- is a requirement for constructive conflict resolution
- ...

Useful skills

Being able to regulate emotions

- **Breathing techniques:** Deep breathing for calming and clarity
- **Mental restructuring:** Changing stressful thoughts into positive ones
- **Taking a break:** taking a short time-out to collect yourself
- **Mindfulness and self-reflection:** Raising awareness of your own emotions and causes
- **Communication techniques:** learn constructive ways of expressing needs and feelings

Useful skills

Negotiating skills

- What is my goal and what is the goal of my partners?
- What is common ground?
- Do we share values or higher goals?
- Am I willing to change my goals or the way to achieve them?
- Am I able to communicate effectively?

Useful skills

Dealing with "mistakes" and problems

- Being constructive is key
- Assigning blame is destructive
- Learning from mistakes and overcoming obstacles means progress beyond the moment

Useful skills

Communication skills

- **Active listening:** genuinely focusing on and comprehending what the speaker is saying, showing interest and understanding through verbal and nonverbal cues
- **Showing genuine interest and demonstrating respect**
- **Clarity:** Clearly and precisely conveying information
- **Flexibility:** Adapting communication style and approach to different situations and individuals
- **Authenticity:** Communicating honestly and sincerely

Conflict resolution

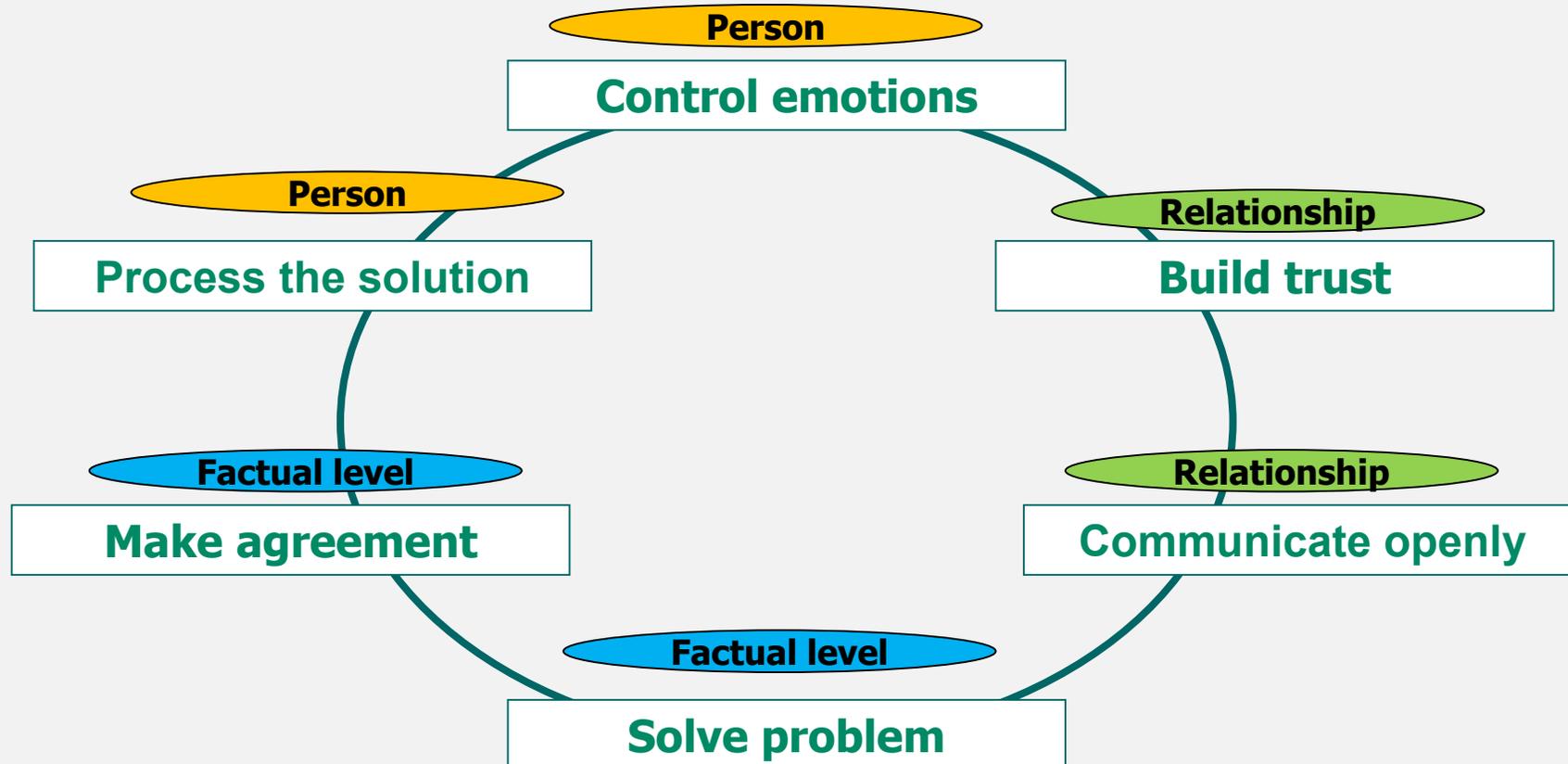
Requirements for conflict resolution

- wanting to "see" the conflict
- want to work through the conflict
- Willingness to "change"
- be accessible to arguments
- accept and control feelings

Conflict resolution

- **The Peacefull Eight (a personal approach)**
 1. Separate facts and interpretations
 2. Activate resource-strengthening memories
 3. Focus your attention on solutions
 4. Take signals from your emotional system seriously
 5. Expand your ability to regulate emotions
 6. Use rational thinking
 7. Pay attention to your motives and needs and those of others
 8. Create inner clarity

Summary of cooperative conflict resolution



What support does the counseling center offer?

- The counseling center is available to employees and managers in IT, administration and services, as well as **researchers, teachers and professors** at Bielefeld University. Counseling is voluntary and subject to confidentiality. (The ZSB is responsible for students).
- **Our services:**
- **We advise you on problems in the workplace, especially conflicts**
- **We support working groups and teams in overcoming disruptions to cooperation**
- We advise managers in IT, administration, services and science on issues relating to leadership
- We advise you in personal (psychological) stress situations

Contact us:

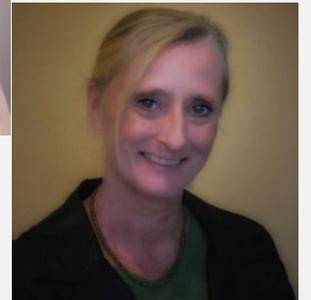
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Questions?

**Thank you very much
for your attention.**