

# **Why cant' we all get along? Managing Conflict**

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Lori Simpson, LSM Services

# Workshop Agenda

- Welcome, introductions and objectives
- What is conflict ?
- Learning to communicate well
- Resolving conflict in our co-op community

# Workshop Objectives

- Learning about our own conflict style
- Gaining a better understanding of conflict
- Developing skills to help our co-ops manage conflict more effectively

# Some thoughts about conflict

Conflict means...

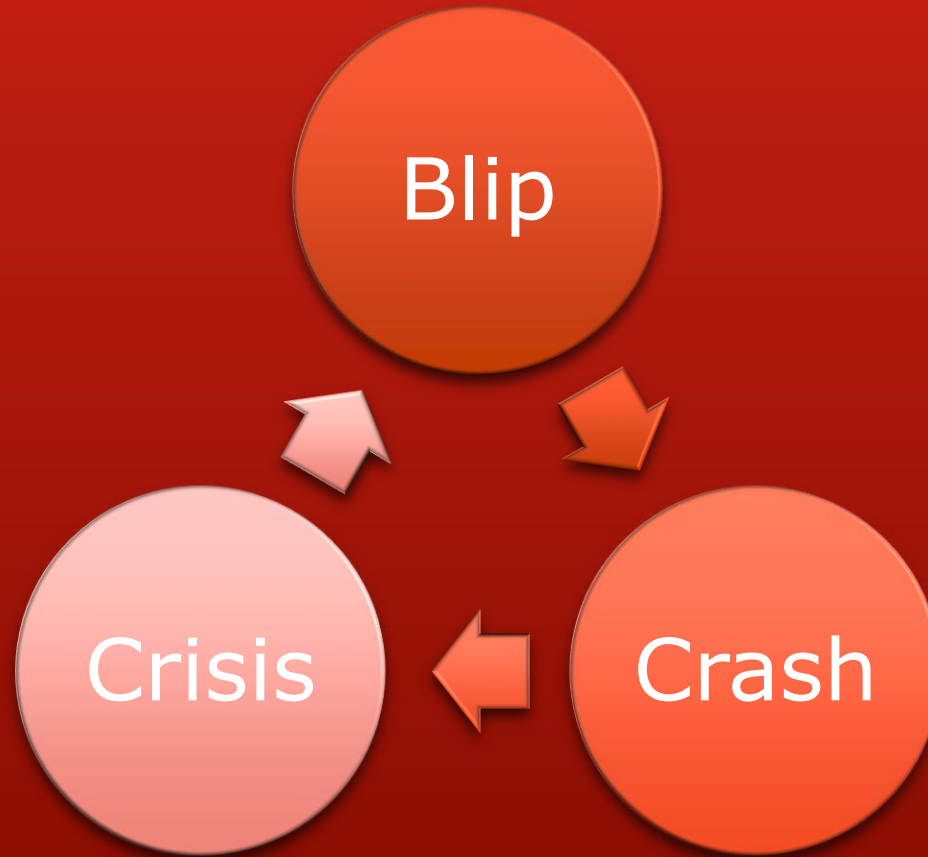
- success, not failure
- uncovers values and interests
- can deepen our understanding of a problem
- is not about winning or losing, but about learning
- is unavoidable – so learn tools to deal with it
- will not **go away**

# What is conflict?

Conflict happens when individuals/groups

- are not getting what they need/want
- are protecting their own interests
- disagree on how to do things

# Conflict Cycle



# Causes of Conflict

- Self
- Needs of wants
- Perceptions
- Assumptions
- Expectations
- Emotion
- Individual communication style
- Misinformation
- Values
- Competition

# How conflict affects community

- damages morale
- creates us/them factions
- destroys relationships
- puts energy into negative activities
- can lead to abusive behavior
- gets the co-op to face/resolve problems
- builds morale
- increases appreciation
- improves policies
- strengthens relationships



# Communication Barriers

## Advising

- "what you should do is.."

## Analyzing/Diagnosing

- "the problem as I see it is..."

## Blaming

- "this wouldn't have happened if you...."

## Cross-examining

- "why did you do that..."

# Communication Barriers

## Judging/Evaluating

- “What you’re doing wrong is../ “the only good thing is..”

## Non-Verbal Blockers

- Turning away, negative body language, ticks/distractions

## Reassuring/Minimizing

- “Don’t worry, it’s no big deal...”

**Break Time!**

# Methods for raising a concern

## “I” Statements

Purpose: To message in a way that doesn't make it worse, to increase likelihood of problem solving.

Method: Talk about the effect of the behavior/issue rather than criticizing/judging.

# "I" Statements

Describe the problem behavior

- "It's a problem for me when you raise your voice when I'm speaking."

Describe the impact

- "It makes it difficult for me to focus on helping you"

State your preference for the future

- "I'd like to finish giving you this information before you ask questions."

Talk about/identify your feelings ( optional)

- "...which will make this less frustrating for me."

# Listening for interests

Interests:

the feelings, beliefs, needs and values that cause people to have a particular reaction /action.

Listening for interests:

- helps discover the underlying reasons why someone takes a particular position.
- uncovers more information about what is important to the person
- the information helps people move away from inflexible positions.

# Active listening techniques

- encouraging
- clarifying questions
- restating
- reflecting Feelings
- validating

# Reframing hostile comments

Defuses anger by acknowledging the speaker's concerns, needs, feelings, values and experiences – without responding to the anger in their statement.



# Steps to reframing hostile comments

1. Recognize the speaker's anger and determine if it is increasing.
2. Find the information embedded in the hostile statement
3. Respond to the speaker's concerns and not to the hostility.

# Preparing to Deal with Conflict

- Change our attitude to conflict. Accept it as natural. Bring it into the open.
- Learn from conflict, so that we manage the next one better.
- Ensure a process for dealing with conflict.
- Educate ourselves on problem solving

# Opportunity to negotiate requires:

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- awareness by both parties that there are issues to resolve;
- mutual need or interdependency;
- a want or need to resolve the situation;
- reasonableness and level-headedness;

# Opportunity to negotiate requires:

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- voluntary participation
- an opportunity to compromise
- there is the ability to change
- both parties desire to reach a mutually acceptable agreement

# Collaborative approach to resolving conflict

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Conditions that support collaboration:

- recognition that a conflict exists
- desire to resolve the conflict
- willingness to try a collaborative approach
- willingness to depersonalize the conflict
- willingness to work together for a resolution

## ISSUE

- What the conflict is about?

## POSITION

- What I want as an outcome?

## INTEREST

- The reasons I want that outcome?

Collaborative approach - positions and interests

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# Putting skills into action

- stop when there is an issue that bothers you
- start talking – identify the problem
- listen to the other side
- value the feelings of others
- list possible solutions.
- evaluate them
- agree on a solution

# Role of different groups in your Co-op

## Individual members

- take direct approach first. member to member.
- be familiar with co-op process for dealing with conflict
- use referrals to external community services



# Roles of different groups

## Board of Directors

- ensure there is a process for resolving conflict. evaluate it regularly.
- get training.
- communicate with members regularly.
- involve members in goal setting for the co-op
- refer members to community services

# Roles of different groups

## Staff

- ensure staff know about the process in place so they can follow it when conflict arises.
- provide opportunities for staff to be trained about conflict, privacy issues etc.
- ensure staff are knowledgeable about referring to outside services in the community

# External Resources

CHASEO and CHF Canada

- Chairing
- Consultations
- Workshops/training

Outside Mediators

# Further Activities for your Co-op

- workshops on:
  - personal communication skills
  - diversity
  - mini-conflict resolution for board/committees
  - chairing skills
  - Problem solving