Conflict Management and Negotiation
• Definition
  – Opposition
  – Incompatible behavior
  – Antagonistic interaction
  – Block another party from reaching her or his goals
Organizational Conflict

- **Organizational Conflict**
  - The discord that arises when goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and those people block or thwart each other’s efforts to achieve their objectives.
(Cont.)

- Conflict is not always bad for an organization
- Do not need to reduce all conflict
- Conflict episodes: ebb and flow of conflict
- An inevitable part of organization life
- Needed for growth and survival
- Conflict management includes increasing and decreasing conflict
- Major management responsibility
Functional and Dysfunctional Conflict

- **Functional conflict**: works toward the goals of an organization or group
- **Dysfunctional conflict**: blocks an organization or group from reaching its goals
  - Dysfunctionally high conflict: what you typically think about conflict
  - Dysfunctionally low conflict: an atypical view
  - Levels vary among groups
Functional and Dysfunctional Conflict (Cont.)

• Dysfunctionally high conflict
  – Tension, anxiety, stress
  – Drives out low conflict tolerant people
  – Reduced trust
  – Poor decisions because of withheld or distorted information
  – Excessive management focus on the conflict
Sources of Conflict

- *Conflict* is “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals” (Wilmot and Hocker, 1998)

- Conflicts exist whenever incompatible activities occur.
Sources of conflict

- Conflict of aims- different goals
- Conflict of ideas- different interpretations
- Conflict of attitudes - different opinions
- Conflict of behavior- different behaviors are unacceptable
Types of Conflict

- Within an individual
- Between two individuals
- Within a team of individuals
- Between two or more teams within an organization
Cont;

- **Intrasender**: within the sender.
- **Intersender**: individual receives two messages from two different sources.
- **Interrol**: when person belongs to more than one group.
- **Person role**: disparities between internal and external roles.
- **Interperson**: between people.
- **Intragroup**: within group.
- **Intergroup**: between groups.
- **Role ambiguity**:
- **Role overload**: cannot meet the expectations.
Reactions to Conflict

- Sublimation
- Vigorous physical exercise
- Increased effort
- Identification: role model, imitating
- Reinterpreting goals
- Substituting goals
- Rationalization
- Attention getting
- Reaction formation
Cont;

- Flight into fantasy
- Projection
- Displacement
- Fixation
- Withdrawal
- Repression
- Regression
- conversion
Escalation of Conflict Tactics
Conflict Episodes

Simple conflict episode

Latent conflict

Manifest conflict

Conflict aftermath
Stages of Conflicts

- **Latent conflict**: antecedents of conflict behavior that can start conflict episode
- **Manifest conflict**: observable conflict behavior
- **Conflict aftermath**
  - End of a conflict episode
  - Often the starting point of a related episode
  - Becomes the latent conflict for another episode
- **Conflict reduction**: lower the conflict level
Conflict Episodes

Latent conflict

Manifest conflict

Conflict reduction

Conflict aftermath
Conflict Episodes (Cont.)

The antecedents of conflict

Example: scarce resources

Latent conflict

Manifest conflict

Conflict aftermath
Conflict Episodes (Cont.)

- Latent conflict
- Manifest conflict
- Conflict aftermath

Example: disagreement, discussion
Conflict Episodes (Cont.)

- Latent conflict
  - Manifest conflict
    - Conflict aftermath
      - Residue of a conflict episode
        - Example: compromise in allocating scarce resources leaves both parties with less than they wanted
Conflict Episodes

Latent conflict

Perceived conflict

Manifest conflict

Felt conflict

Conflict aftermath

Conflict reduction

Text book Figure 11.1
• Perceived conflict
  – Become aware that one is in conflict with another party
  – Can block out some conflict
  – Can perceive conflict when no latent conditions exist
  – Example: misunderstanding another person’s position on an issue
Conflict Episodes (Cont.)

• **Felt conflict**
  – Emotional part of conflict
  – Personalizing the conflict
  – Oral and physical hostility
  – Hard to manage episodes with high felt conflict
  – What people likely recall about conflict
Relationships Among Conflict Episodes

• Episodes link through the connection of conflict aftermath to latent conflict
• Effective conflict management: break the connection
• Discover the latent conflicts and remove them
Toward Conflict Management

• *Conflict management* is defined as “the opportunity to improve situations and strengthen relationships” (BCS, 2004).
  – *proactive conflict management*
  – *collaborative conflict management*
Conflict Management Strategies

• **Functional Conflict Resolution**
  – Handling conflict by compromise or collaboration between parties.
Conflict Management Strategies

• **Compromise**
  – each party is concerned about their goal accomplishment and is willing to engage in give-and-take exchange to reach a reasonable solution.

• **Collaboration**
  – parties try to handle the conflict without making concessions by coming up with a new way to resolve their differences that leaves them both better off.
Conflict Management Strategies

- **Accommodation**
  - one party simply gives in to the other party

- **Avoidance**
  - two parties try to ignore the problem and do nothing to resolve the disagreement
Conflict Management Strategies

• Competition
  – each party tries to maximize its own gain and has little interest in understanding the other’s position
Strategies for management of conflict

• Overview
  – *Lose-lose methods*: parties to the conflict episode do not get what they want
  – *Win-lose methods*: one party a clear winner; other party a clear loser
  – *Win-win methods*: each party to the conflict episode gets what he or she wants
• Summary
  – Lose-lose methods: *compromise*
  – Win-lose methods: *dominance*
  – Win-win methods: *problem solving*
• Negotiation

– Parties to a conflict try to come up with a solution acceptable to themselves by considering various alternative ways to allocate resources to each other
Negotiation

- **Third-party negotiator**
  - an impartial individual with expertise in handling conflicts
  - helps parties in conflict reach an acceptable solution
Third-party Negotiators

• **Mediators**
  – facilitates negotiations but no authority to impose a solution

• **Arbitrator**
  – can impose what he thinks is a fair solution to a conflict that both parties are obligated to abide by
Distributive Negotiation

• **Distributive negotiation**
  – Parties perceive that they have a “fixed pie” of resources that they need to divide
  – Take a competitive adversarial stance
  – See no need to interact in the future
  – Do not care if their interpersonal relationship is damaged by their competitive negotiation
Integrative Bargaining

• **Integrative bargaining**
  – Parties perceive that they might be able to increase the resource pie by trying to come up with a creative solution to the conflict
  – View the conflict as a win-win situation in which both parties can gain
  – Handled through collaboration or compromise