Subsidiarity in Action: Relationship Building & Conflict Resolution

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What is conflict?

- Any contrast between two ideas
- Interpersonal conflicts are unavoidable: when there are no conflicts it means we are not facing them
- Some conflicts are in the open
- Some conflicts are hidden
Assumptions About Conflict

- Disagreements are inevitable in a relationship
- Conflict is an unfolding process
- People can decide how to respond to it
- Early responses have the strongest effect
- Destructive responses to conflicts cause harm to relationships
- Conflicts handled well can move a relationship forward and solve issues
Why we must face conflicts

• Effective conflict resolution is about the pursuit of truth, an attempt to find the best possible answer
• Failure to be honest with one another about disagreements results in festering over time, and transforms into frustrations about the person
• Subsidiarity and solidarity call us to respect personal dignity and recognize that people have gifts and talents to give to others; unresolved conflicts can inhibit their contributions.
Strategies for productive conflict

- Have a stress management plan
- Prepare for conflict
- Have strategies for coping
- Develop strong listening skills
- Ask the right questions
Focus on INTERESTS, not POSITION

- Position:
  What we want (we tend to think in these terms)
- Interests:
  Underlying reasons (most critical)
- How to focus on interests:
  -- Commit to interests, not position
  -- Explain interests, talk about them
  -- Acknowledge other’s interests as part of the problem to be solved

From *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William Ury)
Avoid Fuzzy Words in Conflicts

- Unacceptable
- Unprofessional
- Poor attitude
- Illogical
- Disorganized
- Unreasonable
- Always/Never
- Rarely/Seldom

- Uncommitted
- Uncooperative
- Inflexible
- Unmotivated
- Thoughtless
- Ineffective
- Uncommunicative
- Not a team player
Use “You” vs “I” Statements

“YOU” Statements
1. Why don’t you ever listen?
2. You just don’t understand me!
3. Why are you always late?
4. You must study or you won’t score well!
5. You are of no help at all!
6. You are so insensitive, you just don’t care, you don’t love me!
7. Your room is always a mess!

“I” Statements
1. I feel unheard, can we talk?
2. I feel like I need to clarify what I am trying to say.
3. I find it hard to complete the work when it gets delayed.
4. I want you to be successful; what will it take to raise your scores?
5. I feel overworked and would appreciate some extra help.
6. I love you but am not feeling it being returned.
7. I really like your room when it’s clean.
Prepare for Conflict

- Identify the issue
- Know your “interests” not just your “position”
- Think in terms of opportunity
- Consult with others, a confidant or mentor
- Consider the best time and place
Practicum

• Read conflict scenario assigned to your group
• Decide together what your underlying INTEREST is in this conflict situation – what do you really want
• Decide and write down what you would say to start the next conversation, and with whom, that will move it toward a productive conflict outcome and preserve the relationship
• Practice the conversation in Paired Discussions
• Present to the large group – how did it go?
Questions?

• What do you need to do to be able to address the next conflict that comes along?

• What worked well in this workshop?

• What else do you wish we had talked about or done today?
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