

## Dealing with Conflict on Campus

Understanding Conflict, Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution

## What is Conflict?

- Conflict – disagreement or emotional tension that arises from the incompatibility of needs, goals, feelings, views or desires.
- Conflict is a normal part of life and comes from the fact that people are individuals.
- Conflict is often viewed as negative, but can also be positive; for out of conflict comes growth, change and progress.

## Positive Aspects of Conflict

Conflict is positive when it.....

- Forces communication
- Forces change for the betterment of the common goal
- Results in new ideas
- Produces outcomes that strengthen the organization or relationship
- Promotes growth and efficiency
- Encourages adaptability

## Negative Aspects of Conflict

Conflict is negative when it.....

- Undermines the common goals
- Reduces cooperation
- Results in inappropriate behavior, chaos and confusion
- Divides and separates people
- Reduces logical actions and increases emotional behavior

## Sources of Conflict

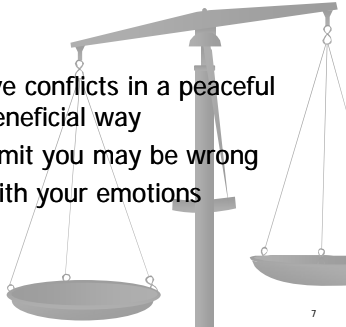
- Misunderstanding/miscommunication
- Dishonesty
- Dependent relationships
- Intention (varying conflicting objectives)
- Exclusive investment in one's own opinion, beliefs and values
- Failure to establish boundaries (unclear jurisdiction)

## Sources of Conflict (continued)

- Mishandling of conflicts
- Fear of the unknown
- Assumptions

## How to Prevent Conflict

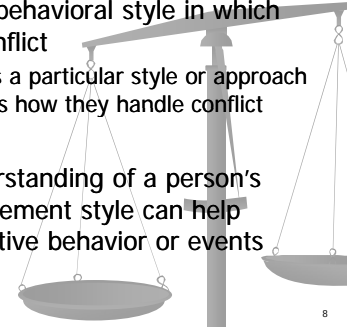
- Be aware
- Be Honest
- Intend to resolve conflicts in a peaceful and mutually beneficial way
- Be willing to admit you may be wrong
- Learn to deal with your emotions



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## What is Conflict Management?

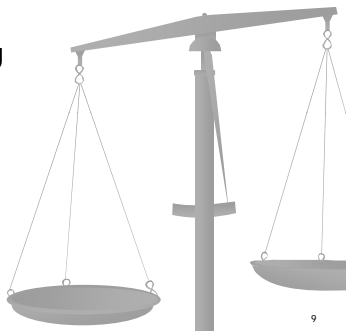
- Characteristic behavioral style in which you handle conflict
  - Everyone uses a particular style or approach that dominates how they handle conflict
- A proper understanding of a person's conflict management style can help minimize negative behavior or events



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## Conflict Management Styles

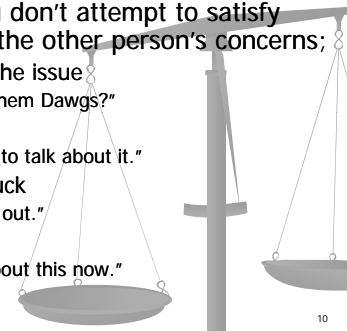
- Avoiding
- Accommodating
- Competing
- Compromising
- Collaborating



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## Avoiding

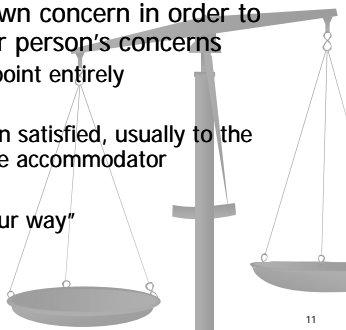
- Avoiding – you don't attempt to satisfy either your or the other person's concerns;
  - Sidestepping the issue
    - "How about them Dawgs?"
  - Ignoring
    - "I don't want to talk about it."
  - Passing the buck
    - "You figure it out."
  - Delaying
    - "I can't talk about this now."



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## Accommodating

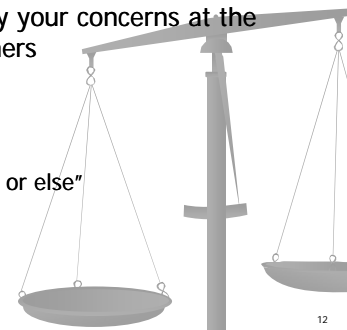
- Sacrifice your own concern in order to satisfy the other person's concerns
  - Concede your point entirely
  - Taking pity
  - Only one person satisfied, usually to the detriment of the accommodator
  - One "winner"
  - "OK, have it your way"
  - "You win"



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## Competing

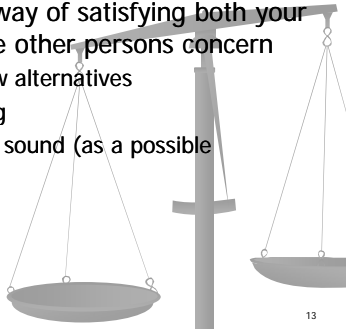
- Strive to satisfy your concerns at the expense of others
  - Forcing
  - Arguing
  - Pulling rank
  - "Do it my way or else"



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## Collaborating

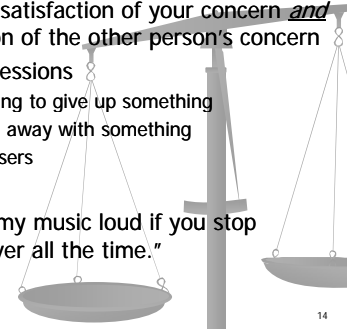
- Look for some way of satisfying both your concern and the other person's concern
  - Looking for new alternatives
  - Problem-solving
  - "How does this sound (as a possible solution)?"



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## Compromising

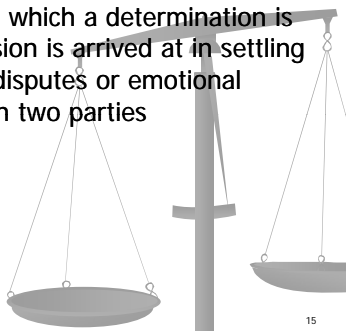
- Settle for partial satisfaction of your concern *and* partial satisfaction of the other person's concern
- Exchanging concessions
  - Each person willing to give up something
  - Everybody walks away with something
  - No winners or losers
- Bargaining
- "I'll quit playing my music loud if you stop having friends over all the time."



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## Conflict Resolution

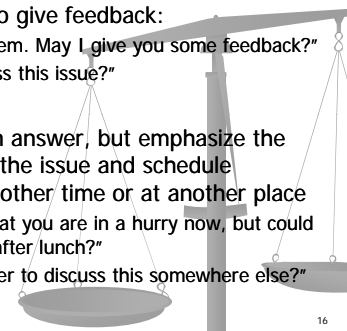
- The **process** in which a determination is made or a decision is arrived at in settling disagreement, disputes or emotional tension between two parties



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## Resolving Conflict

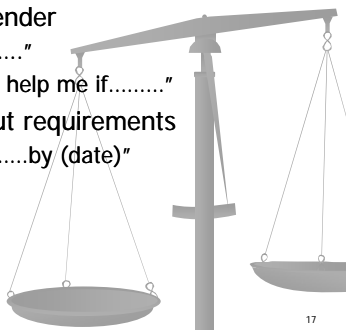
- Ask permission to give feedback:
  - "I've got a problem. May I give you some feedback?"
  - "Could we discuss this issue?"
- Respect no as an answer, but emphasize the need to address the issue and schedule discussion for another time or at another place
  - "I understand that you are in a hurry now, but could we discuss this after lunch?"
  - "Would you prefer to discuss this somewhere else?"



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## Resolving Conflict (continued)

- Focus on the Sender
  - "I need you to...."
  - "It would really help me if....."
- Be specific about requirements
  - "I need you to.....by (date)"



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## Communication Skills for Effective Conflict Resolution


- Good communication skills
  - Necessary for effective conflict resolution
- Communication
  - Listener hears and understands a speaker's essential thoughts, acts and feelings
  - Many conflicts continue because of poor communication between people



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## Good Communication Skills

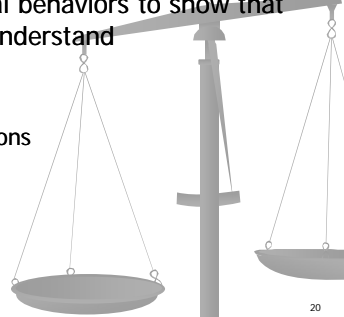
- Active listening
- Summarizing
- Clarifying



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## Active Listening

- Using nonverbal behaviors to show that you hear and understand
  - Tone of voice
  - Eye contact
  - Facial expressions
  - Posture
  - Gestures

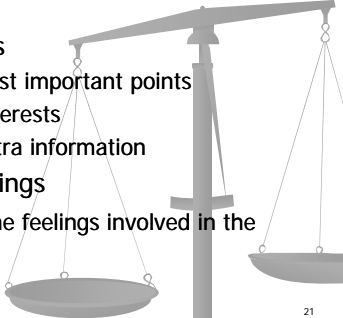


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## Summarizing

2 processes:

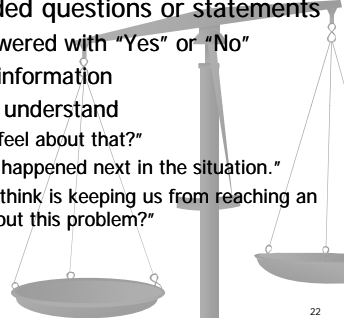
1. Restating facts
  - Repeating most important points
  - Organizing interests
  - Discarding extra information
2. Reflecting feelings
  - Recognizing the feelings involved in the conflict



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## Clarifying

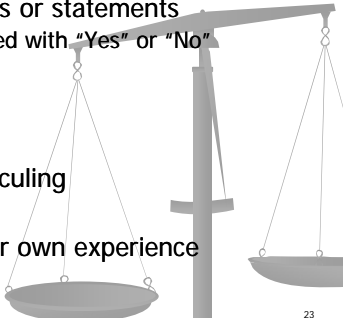
- Using open-ended questions or statements
  - Cannot be answered with "Yes" or "No"
  - Get additional information
  - Make sure you understand
    - "How did you feel about that?"
    - "Tell me what happened next in the situation."
    - "What do you think is keeping us from reaching an agreement about this problem?"



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## Communication Pitfalls

- Closed questions or statements
  - Can be answered with "Yes" or "No"
- Interrupting
- Offering advice
- Judging
- Laughing or ridiculing
- Criticizing
- Bringing up your own experience



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## Mediation: When Your Efforts Don't Resolve Conflict

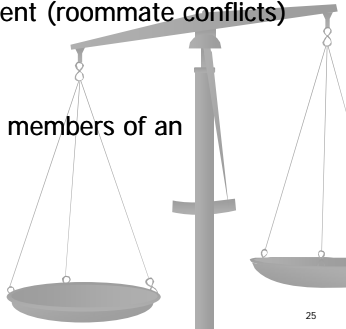
- Mediation – a conflict resolution process in which a trained neutral person assists parties in reaching a settlement of their differences
- ABAC offers mediation as a conflict resolution method



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## Conflicts That Can be Mediated

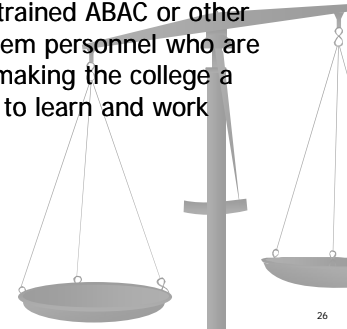
- Student-to-student (roommate conflicts)
- Student-faculty
- Student-staff
- Issues between members of an organization
- And more.....



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## Who are the mediators?

- Mediators are trained ABAC or other University System personnel who are committed to making the college a peaceful place to learn and work



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## Procedures for students to use when settling disputes

### If You Live in a Dorm:

1. Talk with the person you are having problems with and see if the two of you can resolve your differences informally

### **If that doesn't solve the problem, then:**

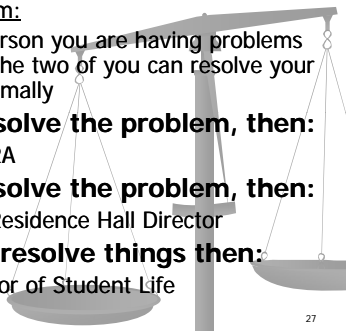
2. Talk with your RA

### **If that doesn't solve the problem, then:**

3. Talk with your Residence Hall Director

### **If that doesn't resolve things then:**

4. Go to the Director of Student Life



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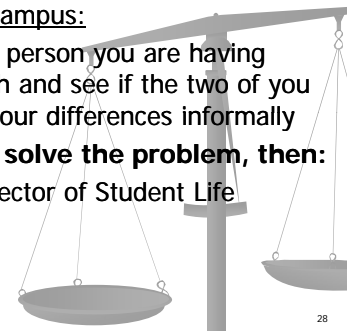
## Procedures for students to use when settling disputes

### If You Live Off Campus:

1. Talk with the person you are having problems with and see if the two of you can resolve your differences informally

### **If that doesn't solve the problem, then:**

2. Go to the Director of Student Life



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## Procedures for students to use when settling disputes

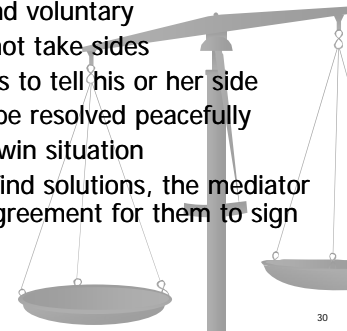
- If no resolution is made, individuals are encouraged to pursue mediation as the next step



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## Value of Mediation

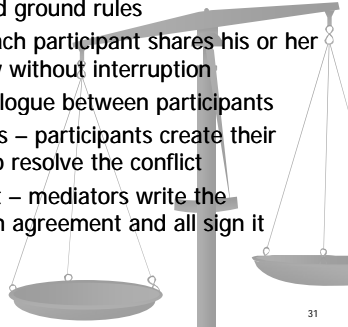
- Confidential and voluntary
- Mediators do not take sides
- Each party gets to tell his or her side
- Problems can be resolved peacefully
- Creates a win-win situation
- When parties find solutions, the mediator will write an agreement for them to sign
- IT'S FREE !!



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## 5 Stages in the Mediation Process

1. Introduction and ground rules
2. Storytelling – each participant shares his or her side of the story without interruption
3. Exchange of dialogue between participants
4. Finding solutions – participants create their own solutions to resolve the conflict
5. Final agreement – mediators write the solutions into an agreement and all sign it



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