Environmental Justice Training Module: Partnerships and Power Sharing

Board of Directors Meeting
February 2, 2022

Veronica Eady
Senior Deputy Executive Officer of Policy & Equity
Definition of Conflict

“Conflict is any situation where your concerns or desires differ from another person’s.”

Thomas and Kilmann (1974)
Elements of Conflict

All conflicts are:
• perceived by the senses
• manifested through body language and kinesthetic sensations
• embodied and given meaning by thoughts and ideas
• steeped in intense emotions, made conscious through awareness

And:
• may then be resolved by conversations and experiences
• develop into character
• nurture a capacity for openness and trust
• and contribute to learning and an ability to change.
The brain is awash in chemicals, hormones and neurotransmitters that accentuate or dampen its responses and influence its organization and operations. With regard to conflict, the following compounds seem to be most active:

- Adrenalin
- Testosterone
- Oxytocin
- Estrogen
- Endorphins
- Dopamine
- Serotonin
- Phenylethylaline
- Vasopressin
Dual Pathways in Conflict

The “fight or flight” response is a physiological reaction from the release of adrenaline hormone that occurs in response to a perceived harmful event, attack, or threat to survival.

The physical basis for collaboration, altruism, trust, forgiveness, and interest-based conflict resolution techniques, has been clearly identified with the “tend and befriend” hormone oxytocin.
Dual Pathways in Conflict

- High focus on Relationships / Trust
- High focus on Process / Agenda

- Assertive
  - Directing
  - Avoiding
- Cooperative
  - Collaborating
  - Accommodating
Collaboration and Conflict Through Process and Relationships

- Decision-making
- Planning
- Accountability
- Communication
- Adapting
- Analysis
- Local governments
- Community Steering Committee
- Project teams
- California Air Resources Board
- Activists
- Community Advisory Council
- Business and Industry
- Divisions

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Bay Area Air Quality Management District
The Challenge

How do we overcome evolutionary instincts towards “fight or flight” and foster a culture at the Air District that cultivates “tend and befriend” approaches to our work?
Keynote Presentation

Understanding your conflict resolution style to navigate conflict

Sarah Rubin
Chief Outreach and Engagement Advisor
Department of Conservation
This Morning

• Managing Conflict
  • Conflict is normal, it’s how you manage it
• Introduction to Tools for Success
  • Neurobiology / Brain science
  • Understanding Your Own Conflict Style
  • Practical Tips
Challenging Situations
• Colleagues/ staff/ public
Sarah’s work with the air district began in 2000
What do we think of when we think of public engagement?
Conflict

Conflict is normal. Conflict is hard.

Without conflict, the status quo remains. In other words, avoiding it prevents you from growing and the relationship from moving forward.

“Is this a problem we can ‘solve,’ or is it an ongoing polarity we must manage well?”

- Barry Johnson, Polarity Management
Your Conflict Approach Falls Along A Spectrum

Avoiding  Engaging
Escalation Increases Complexity and Cost of Conflict
Conflict management and collaborative partnerships
Five Skills & Tips for Success
Conflict Style Self Test

Tip for Success #1: Understand Your Own Conflict Style

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument
(Sterling Forst, NY: Xicom, 1977)

https://www.usip.org/public-education/students/conflict-styles-assessment
Discussion

What surprised you about your own results? How might this knowledge help you to gauge other folks' styles?
Use Knowledge of Your Own Conflict Style Strategically
Why government led engagement often doesn’t work

Some answers from neurobiology or ‘brain science’
Four Forces Creating a Perfectly Human Storm

- Destructive communication
- Brain's survival instincts
- Archaic Processes
- Complex issues & people

Source: Talk Matters! by Mary Galinas
Three Bodies of Knowledge

Brain science & mindfulness

Effective communication skills

Innovative conversational forms

Source: Talk Matters! by Mary Galinas
Typical meeting set up...
Our brains …

Like certainty & dislike unpredictability

Our brain tells us to be:
• More sensitive to danger/ fear than reward/ pleasure
• Seek safe/ comfortable status positions at all times
• Seek/ relate to ‘in group’ but not out group
• React negatively to unfair behavior
• Motivated by autonomy – don’t like to be forced to behave a certain way

Sources: Lack, J. & Bogacz, F. and Galinas, M.
Collaborative Partnerships

Tip for Success #3: Build authentic partnerships
Partnerships - Why

- Extend the agency’s education and outreach capacities so more residents are aware and informed
- Balance the most involved advocates with perspectives representing more of the community
- Reduce misperceptions and mistrust, and reduce contentiousness
- Identify broader community-based resources and recommendations
- Develop communication channels for keeping people informed over time
- Enhance the cultural competency of engagement plans
- Reach people emotionally as well as physically

Reference: CA-ILG’s Partnering with Community-Based Organizations for More Broad-Based Public Engagement
Successful Partnerships Need the Right Conditions

Adequate advance dialogue
- determine the mutual interests of the partnership

Agency’s decision-makers are on board
- and committed to the intended outcome of the partnership.

Authentic request
- for community input that will be seriously considered in the decision-making process.

Mutual respect
- for what each party brings (ex. attitudinal barriers)

Clearly defined roles and expectations
- For both the agency and community partner

Communication
- The agency is prepared to support the information and communication needs of the broader cross section of the public

Reference: CA-ILG’s Partnering with Community-Based Organizations for More Broad-Based Public Engagement

Bay Area Air Quality Management District
Dialogue & High Emotions

Tip for Success #4: Listen Respectfully
### High Emotion Speaking and Listening

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<tr>
<th>Understand physiological reactions</th>
<th>Invite the other person to share their issues</th>
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<tr>
<td>Breathe deeply</td>
<td>Listen to the other person until they are done speaking</td>
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<td>Take stock of the situation – what is going on for you?</td>
<td>Acknowledge the others strong feelings (verbally or non-verbally)</td>
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<td>Address the current issue calmly</td>
<td>Create a safe space or time to talk it through</td>
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Disagreeing Respectfully

- Listen carefully and actively
- Ask person how they came to their viewpoint or decision
- Tell person that you disagree with them
- Clearly, directly, and calmly tell them your point
- Succinctly tell them the reason for your point
- Thank them for listening
Tool: Scenario Planning

- Ideal
- Likely/Status Quo
- Worst Case
Tip for Success #5: Learn From Each Other

Your Wisdom Matters
Wrap Up
Traditionally, DOC divisions focused solely on their area of responsibilities.

Today, DOC is using a new framework to connect and unify divisions around four themes of natural and working lands.

The framework enables DOC’s collective expertise to help address California’s resource challenges and opportunities.
The Department of Conservation uses a four-pillar framework to align its work with the Governor’s climate and natural resource goals.

These pillars illustrate how DOC supports partners inside and outside state government.

The pillars also provide a means for identifying future work within DOC and with partners.
DOC’s Carbon Management
Helping local communities use the vestiges of our past, to fight climate change in the future.

Carbon Management
DOC enhances the capacity of natural and working lands to help California achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.
THANK YOU

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The listening Project
THE LISTENING PROJECT

A Community-Driven Project of the Richmond Progressive Alliance
In support of a transition away from fossil fuels in the City of Richmond, the Richmond Progressive Alliance (the RPA) is undertaking a community-engagement process we’re calling a “listening project” (the Listening Project). The goal of the Listening Project is to better understand the concerns and needs of Richmond communities that have historically suffered the greatest harm from generations of fossil fuel operations in our City.
The Listening Project
A Project of the RPA

OUR PROCESS

LISTEN
To the MOST harmed by fossil fuel operations in Richmond

EDUCATE
To DISPEL myths created by Chevron's rheotic that is embedded in our city

ENGAGE
To build RELATIONAL POWER and a community-driven campaign

ACTIVE
To MOBILIZE the community with a campaign towards a fossil free Richmond

Bay Area Air Quality Management District
Bay Area Air Quality Management District

The Listening Project Podcast Teaser

Sharing Our Stories
Amplifying Our Voices

THE LP PODCAST

A Project of the Richmond Progressive Alliance