 Toolbox

Title : Conflict ? What are we talking about?

Exercise Code: SLINSUP001

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| Category: | Size: | Duration: | Language: |
| 5 Conflict Solving Strategy  8 Situational Awareness | Small group | 60 mn | English |

# Purpose/Aims:

When we speak about conflict or about situation of conflict, what do we speak about? Have we the good vision of the situation in which we are, or the good vision of the situation which we state or in which we are stated? What is the part of subjectivity or objectivity which livens up leads our reflection? Have we the sufficient distance to estimate the important level of the conflict? Etc. … So many questions arise unconsciously to us and on which it would be advisable to be able to put a few moments our reflection.

# Description:

Contrary to an idea which could be common, to disagree with ideas does not characterize necessarily a situation of conflict. This happens very often when one of the parts tries to assert his positions without taking into account positions of the other parts.

We often think that the conflict between people is a "bad" relation. Nevertheless, numerous sociologists (as Georg Simmel), philosophers (as Hegel or Nietzsche) or psychologists develop a more positive vision of the conflict as the state of relation between individuals. Some psychologists consider that the conflicts are not errors of the communication, but that it is as well normal and commonplace to quarrel as to get on well: " the relational problems are inherent to the nature and to the dynamics of a relation because to live together and to communicate, is complicated and difficult ".

However, the conflict is always painful and, contrary to a good agreement, it prevents the relation from progressing and from being productive. That is why it is often necessary to regulate it and to solve it.  
But for this, it is more important to allow the partners to understand what takes place between them

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and lead their relation (instead of being lead by it) than to bring them (by force or persuasion) towards a "good agreement" which would not take into account the reality of their differences. (Wikipedia source / conflict / social sciences)

The word "Conflict" itself can be interpreted or defined in a different way according to the approach

we can make .

In sociology the conflict arises when a decision cannot be taken by the usual procedures, the sociology of organizations showing that the conflicts depend on organizational models and on relations of power.  
  
In law the notion of conflict finds a different approach if we think with a point of view of the Labor law, the Public International law or Private International law, the Administrative law. (Source http: // to www.cnrtl.fr / definition / conflict)  
In psychoanalysis we can understand it as being characterized by a "Violent dualism involving three essential elements of the personality: the that, the me and the superego ".

In philosophy and human sciences it will be advisable to specify its meaning and its specification according to the concerned domains: socio-political, Ethnology, Morality, Pedagogy, Psychology, Psychoanalysis.  
So many approaches which allow to better understand the complexity of this notion and the difficulties which ensue from it

*Exercise:*The exercise will take support on the model of the tool ' " The tree of the Conflict " which will be drawn on a paper board. This tree will be constituted with 3 parts: the dynamic factors of the conflict (symbolized by leaves and branches); the obvious problems (symbolized by the trunk); the structural factors (symbolized by roots).  
Before the beginning of this activity, a person will be chosen. She will be in charge of leading the discussion which will be established after other participants had made a personal analysis in which this person will not participate..

*Individual Work*: first, you ask each trainee to note or draw on one or several paper sheets some elements representing important sources of conflicts.

Then, each participant will have to stick those elements in the best place on the tree

*Discussions within a group*: the drawn lots person will take support on elements put on “the tree of the conflict” to introduce the discussions and regulate them. She (it) will send the questioning to the whole group to bring to the foreground a common reflection on the opportunity to have put such element in such place of the tree. The purpose being to manage to lead a collective reflection shared without spreading(pushing aside) the reasons or the personal motives of the choice which was taken.

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**Objectives:**   
· Understand the links which can exist between the underlying and deep causes of a conflict.  
· Bring the necessary elements for the participants to be able to build their own analysis and their own approach of a situation.

# Material:

Paper board, Paper sheets, Tables and chairs

# Methods:

Individual work, Group activities and analysis

# Advice for Trainer:

The participant will be attentive to the location of each element. Through a work of guidance in the exchanges, he will have to lead the participants to find why such element was put in such place.  
· Is this choice subjective or was it made for real objective reasons?  
· How to establish the links between the fundamental causes and the dynamic factors?  
· How is made the interaction and what are the limits?  
· Can a punctual mediation which can appear " instantly", be an answer to deeper causes?

# Source/Literature:

Friedrich Glas l: *la gestion des conflits.* *Un guide pour les gestionnaires, consultants et conseillers.* Haupt, Berne 9 A. 2009

Roger Fisher, William Ury, Bruce Patton *Getting to Yes.* *La technique de négociation classique.* 24ème edition

*http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/conflit*

# Handouts:

« The Tree of the conflict » made by INSUP (not yet available in English : will be translated)

Document which summarizes sources of conflict and attitudes and solutions

# Contributor (partner): INSUP