

# Difficult Conversations

Presentation to  
SDBOR Academic Leadership

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When we say

“Difficult Conversations”

– what comes to mind?

“Conflict”

- what comes to mind?



Discuss:

Conflict – Is it always a bad thing?

What are reasons we tend to avoid difficult conversations?

What are consequences that result from avoiding conflict and/or difficult conversations?



## Conflict “Management” Styles:

- Forcing
- Avoiding
- Accommodating
- Compromising
- Collaborating



Conflict “Management” Styles:

“Conflict Management Styles Quiz”



# Scoring “Conflict Management Styles Quiz”

To find your most preferred style, total the points in the respective categories. **The one with the highest score indicates your most commonly used strategy. The one with the lowest score indicates your least preferred strategy.** However, if you are a leader who must deal with conflict on a regular basis, you may find your style to be a blend of styles.

<u>Style</u>	<u>Corresponding Statements:</u>	<u>Total:</u>
Collaborating:	1, 5, 7	_____
Forcing:	4, 9, 12	_____
Avoiding:	6, 10, 15	_____
Accommodating:	3, 11, 14	_____
Compromising:	2, 8, 13	_____



## Conflict “Management” Principles:

- Make the relationship your priority
- Focus on the present
- Pick your battles
- Know when to let something go
- Be willing to forgive



## Conflict “Management” Tactics:

- Conversation should be private & timely
- Express your thoughts/ feelings in words, not actions
- Be specific about what the concern is
- No personal attacks





## Conflict “Management” Tactics:

- Avoid accusations or attributing “motives”
- Don’t generalize or exaggerate
- Don’t stockpile
- Avoid “clamming up”
- Be ready to postpone or “pause”



## Conflict – Final thoughts

- Conflict is inevitable
- Difficult conversations to manage conflict or issues is an important part of being a leader to keep the team running smoothly *and* maximizing effectiveness