




# Managing Community Conflict

November 29, December 6 and December 13, 2007  
1:30 – 3 p.m. CST

By Janet Ayres

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## Managing Community Conflict



SLIDE 2

November 29 – Understanding Community Conflict & Extension's Roles

**December 6 – Dealing with People**

December 13 – Collaborative Problem Solving

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## Dealing with People

SLIDE 3

Extension professionals frequently find themselves confronting complex, controversial community issues. Extension can play many valuable roles in helping the community work through its issues.

- Convener – Bring diverse people together
- Educator – provide technical information/data
- Mediator – work between parties to build relationships
- Facilitator – guide group problem-solving processes

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	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Learning Objectives</h2>
<p>SLIDE 4</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>The learning objectives for the December 6<sup>th</sup> session are to better understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What shapes how people deal with conflict</li> <li>• Different approaches to conflict situations</li> <li>• Underlying dynamics of adversarial behavior</li> <li>• How to manage our own responses to conflict</li> <li>• How to practice more intentional, effective communication</li> <li>• How to deal with high emotions in group setting</li> </ul>

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	<h2 style="text-align: center;">What Shapes How People Deal with Conflict</h2>
<p>SLIDE 5</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>From your experiences, what shapes how people deal with conflict?</p> <p>How do people learn their "conflict style"?</p>

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	<h2 style="text-align: center;">What Shapes How People Deal with Conflict</h2>
<p>SLIDE 6</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>Attitudes toward conflict are shaped early in life, thus forming a patterned approach to conflict as adults.</p> <p>Largely, the patterns are <i>competition (fight)</i> or <i>avoidance (flight)</i>.</p>

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## What Shapes How People Deal with Conflict

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How people deal with conflict is also influenced by:

- Personality (source: *Wired for Conflict* by Sondra S. VanSant [www.capt.org](http://www.capt.org). \$14.95)
- Values (family and experiences)
- Culture (family, community and institutions)
- Power (sense of self and view of others)
- Experiences

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## How Communities Deal with Conflict

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How communities deal learn to deal with conflict are essentially the same as for individuals. Patterns are learned and are influenced by individuals and organizations, cultural values and norms, power dynamics and relationships, and history of past experiences.

The good news is that conflict management skills can be learned and practiced by individuals, organizations, and communities.

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## Approaches to Conflict

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The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode identifies 5 approaches to conflict based on two basic human motives -- meeting our own needs (assertiveness) and concern for satisfying the needs of others (cooperativeness).

Source: Thomas-Kilmann conflict Mode Instrument. 1996. Available through CPP, Inc. [www.cpp.com](http://www.cpp.com)

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	<h2>Approaches to Conflict</h2>
<p>SLIDE 10</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competing -- assertive and uncooperative, a power-oriented mode (<i>I win, you lose</i>).</li> <li>• Accommodating – unassertive and cooperative, neglects own needs (<i>I lose, you win</i>).</li> <li>• Avoiding – unassertive and uncooperative (<i>I lose, you lose</i>).</li> <li>• Compromising – intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness (<i>I win/lose some, you win/lose some</i>).</li> <li>• Collaborating – both assertive and cooperative (<i>I win, you win</i>).</li> </ul>

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	<h2>Understanding Adversarial Behavior</h2>
<p>SLIDE 11</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>If we better understand what makes people adversarial, we are better equipped to respond in appropriate ways – to prevent destructive actions or to move the conflict in a constructive direction.</p> <p>What makes people adversarial? What makes people angry in public meetings and act badly?</p>

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	<h2>Reasons People Are Adversarial</h2>
<p>SLIDE 12</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of loss, of change.</li> <li>• Act the only way they know how.</li> <li>• Consciously choose to be adversarial when stakes are high and they feel it is the best way to communicate their interests, "to win".</li> <li>• Mirroring the behavior of their opponents.</li> <li>• Feel they have no control over their lives -- they have not been involved in the process or feel they have not had a "voice" in the issue.</li> <li>• Past relationships that have been negative; low trust</li> </ul>

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## Responses to Adversarial Situations

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It is important to understand your own reactions to adversarial people.

Natural reactions are to:

- Strike back, be defensive. What happens?
- Give in. What happens?
- End the relationship. What happens?

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## Retaliatory Cycle

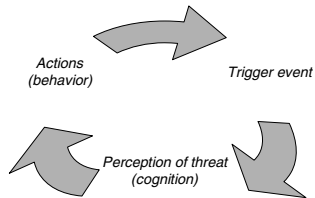
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## Responses to Conflict – General Principles

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- Separate the *people* from the *problem*.
- Focus on *interests* not *positions*.

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**Dynamic Conflict Model**

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graph TD
    PE[Precipitating Event] --> IC[Initiate Conflict]
    IC --> CR[Constructive Responses  
Behaviors which keep conflict to a minimum]
    IC --> DR[Destructive Responses  
Behaviors which escalate or prolong the conflict]
    CR --> TFC[Task-Focused Conflict (Cognitive)]
    DR --> PFC[Person-Focused Conflict (Emotional)]
    TFC --> TFC_L["• Focus on task and problem solving  
• Positive effect  
• Tension decreases  
• Group functioning improves  
• Conflict De-Escalates"]
    PFC --> PFC_L["• Focus on personalities  
• Negative emotions (anger, frustration)  
• Tension increases  
• Group functioning decreases  
• Conflict Escalates"]
  
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**De-Escalating High Levels of Emotions**

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- Be aware of one's own "hot buttons"; control own emotions
- "Go to the Balcony"
- Listen to understand
- Ask questions to better understand
- Framing/Reframing
- Find bridges to common ground

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**Awareness of One's Own Emotions**

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Through increased awareness of self, we can better understand our motives for what we say and do. In conflict situations, it is important to be *intentional* in our communication.

What are our "hot buttons"?

Do we escalate adverse situations, or are we able to de-escalate the encounter?

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## “Go to the Balcony”

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Fisher and Ury coined the phrase, “go to the balcony”, as a means of detaching oneself from the situation to be able to see the situation more objectively such as observing a play from a balcony. In other words, don’t take the encounter personally.

This buys time to think about your response. Be deliberate in your choice of words, tone of voice, and facial expressions. Most importantly, know your intent (to inform, to hurt, to judge, to clarify, etc.).

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## Listen to Understand the Other Party

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Listen to others without passing judgment. Reflect both emotion and content of what you heard them say and check it out to ensure you understood correctly.

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## Listening to Understand the Other Party

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Common mistakes in listening:

- We try to solve the problem rather than focus on what people are saying.
- We try to analyze the problem.
- We tell people how much we understand the problem.
- We tend to interview people who are upset rather than listen to them, asking questions that help us judge who is right and wrong or decide what course of action to recommend.

Source: Conflict Resolution for Managers, 2007, p. 105.

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## Principles of Effective Listening

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- Assume that you do not already know what the person is trying to say.
- Takes energy to focus
- Check out what you have heard
- Listening is different from problem solving. When people are upset, it is listening that they need first.

Source: Conflict Resolution for Managers, 2007, p. 105.

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## Ask Questions to Understand Other Party

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- What outcomes would you like?
- What do you see as the next step?
- What information do you feel is needed?

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## Speak Your Message

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- Be intentional when you speak.
- Know your point and why you are saying it.
- Are you escalating the conflict?

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	<h1>Framing</h1>
<p>SLIDE 25</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>Whether raising an issue, discussing a conflict, negotiating an agreement, or engaging in a problem-solving discussion, the way we present our ideas, concerns, or requests is critical.</p> <p>Framing is about posing or labeling a problem or concern in a manner that facilitates a resolution rather than an escalation of the conflict.</p> <p>It moves the thinking from "either/or" to "both/and".</p>

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	<h1>Framing Example</h1>
<p>SLIDE 26</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>If you were planning an educational meeting and sent out flyers with the following,</p> <p>"Should Carroll County preserve its prime farmland?"</p> <p>What might result?</p>

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	<h1>Framing Example</h1>
<p>SLIDE 27</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>If there are interests for prime farmland protection and for economic growth/development, a better way to frame the program might be:</p> <p>"<i>How can we conserve agricultural land and foster economic growth.</i>"</p>

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	<h2>Reframing</h2>
<p>SLIDE 28</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>Reframing is about hearing someone else's negative comments, stripping away hostile or unproductive language, focusing on their interests or essential message, and feeding this information back to the speaker.</p>

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	<h2>Reframing Example</h2>
<p>SLIDE 29</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>How would you reframe the following statement:</p> <p>“We need an ordinance to control these &amp;#! industrialized animal operations run by foreigners that come in here and stink up the air and pollute our water.”</p>

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	<h2>Understanding Adversarial Behavior</h2>
<p>SLIDE 30</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>In a community context, expect differences and conflict. When stakes are high on an issue, there will be high levels of emotion. However, when one person behaves in a highly emotional, negative way, it can set in motion a chain reaction of destructive behaviors.</p>

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	<h2>Managing High Emotional Levels at Public Meetings</h2>
<p>SLIDE 31</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>What are some strategies to manage high emotional levels at public meetings?</p>

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	<h2>Managing High Emotional Levels at Public Meetings</h2>
<p>SLIDE 32</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be clear about the purpose of the meeting (to inform, to gather in-put, to deliberate, to make a decision).</li> <li>• Consider the tone you want to set.</li> <li>• Be clear about the agenda.</li> <li>• Consider a facilitator.</li> <li>• Consider the meeting's structure (large group, small groups) and processes to be used.</li> <li>• Consider room set-up.</li> </ul>

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	<h2>Managing High Emotional Levels at Public Meetings</h2>
<p>SLIDE 33</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how people's in-put will be taken (provide multiple avenues).</li> <li>• Consider how in-put will be recorded.</li> <li>• Have people wear nametags.</li> <li>• Consider having people introduce themselves.</li> <li>• Ask people to sign in and provide address.</li> <li>• Consider refreshments.</li> <li>• Set ground rules.</li> <li>• Adjourn the meeting.</li> </ul>

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	<h2>Managing High Emotional Levels at Public Meetings</h2>
SLIDE 34	What are some ground rules you might establish?
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	<h2>Summary</h2>
SLIDE 35	<p>Extension can play many important roles in a community including: teaching community conflict management skills, preventing conflict on issues through a collaborative problem-solving approach, or helping to de-escalate the conflict through better communication or meeting management when high emotions erupt.</p> <p>Extension professionals serve as teachers, information providers, mediators, conveners, facilitators, group members, process coaches and many other useful roles in community conflict.</p>
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	<h2>Leading Through Conflict</h2>
SLIDE 36	<p>In a new book, <i>Leading Through Conflict</i>, Gerzon identifies 8 tools leaders can use to transform conflict to “heal and unite”, “to reach a higher ground of creativity and innovation”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integral vision – acknowledging all sides of a conflict</li> <li>• Systems thinking – understanding the relationships among factors contributing to the conflict.</li> </ul> <p>Source: Gerzon, Mark. 2006. <i>Leading Through Conflict</i>. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.</p>
<p>Foundations of Practice</p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2006 NCRICRD</p>  	

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	<h2>Leading Through Conflict</h2>
<p>SLIDE 37</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence – applying all your mental, emotional, and spiritual resources to grasping the nature of the conflict.</li> <li>• Inquiry – asking questions to elicit essential information for addressing the conflict.</li> <li>• Conscious Communication – choosing with awareness how you speak and listen during the conflict.</li> </ul>

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	<h2>Leading Through Conflict</h2>
<p>SLIDE 38</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue – communicating in ways that inspire participants' ability to work through the conflict.</li> <li>• Bridging – building partnerships &amp; alliances that cross the borders dividing the organization/community.</li> <li>• Innovation – fostering breakthrough solutions that create new options for resolving the conflict.</li> </ul>

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	<h2>Resources</h2>
<p>SLIDE 39</p> <p><b>Foundations of Practice</b></p> <p>Component 3 Managing Community Conflict</p> <p>Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals in the North Central Region</p> <p>© 2005 NCRICRD</p>  	<p>Carpenter, Susan L. and W.J.D. Kennedy, 2001. <i>Managing Public Disputes</i>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</p> <p>Dukes, E. Franklin, 1996. <i>Resolving Public Conflict – Transforming Community and Governance</i>. NY: St. Martin's Press.</p> <p>Fisher, Roger, W. Ury, and B. Patton. 1991. <i>Getting to Yes – Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In</i> (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.</p> <p>Gerzon, Mark. 2007. <i>Leading Through Conflict</i>. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.</p> <p>Moore, Christopher W. 2003. <i>The Mediation Process – Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict</i> (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.</p>

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## Resources (cont.)

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Patterson, Kelly, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler. 2002. *Crucial Conversations – Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Runde, Craig E. and T. A. Flanagan. 2007. *Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Singlelary, Loretta, Ann Ball, and Marlene Rebori. (no date). *Managing Natural Resource Disputes*. University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Bulletin EB-00-04.

Susskind, Lawrence and Jeffrey Cruikshank. 1987. *Breaking the Impasse: Consensual Approaches to Resolving Public Disputes*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Susskind, Lawrence and Patrick Field. 1996. *Dealing with an Angry Public – the Mutual Gains Approach to Resolving Disputes*. New York: The Free Press.

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## December 13 Session: Collaborative Problem Solving

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- Situations that lend themselves to collaborative problem solving and those that don't
- Principles of collaboration
- Collaborative problem solving process from situational analysis to evaluation
- Extension roles

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