



## Facilitator's Guide

# Understanding and Dealing with Conflict

*Even a straight pin is no good if it loses its head. —Anonymous*

### Rationale:

Conflict is as common as rain and arises wherever people come in contact and have competing needs. Conflict is not always bad and may be needed to keep organizations growing and to provide personal growth opportunities. Successful conflict resolution relies on understanding how to utilize the correct conflict response for each circumstance and the removal of barriers to effectiveness.

### Program Goal:

To develop understanding of effective conflict responses for different situations and removal of barriers to resolution.

### Program Objectives:

- Recognize the characteristics of five conflict management approaches
- Demonstrate the application of appropriate responses to potential organizational conflict situations
- Analyze the effect of positive and negative emotional communication behaviors toward effective conflict resolution

### Pre-Program Preparation/Materials:

- Make copies of the Pre-Test for each participant.
- Study and make copies of *Understanding and Dealing with Conflict* (CLD1-7).
- Make copies of PPT #1 – *Responses to a Conflict Situation on the Smith Family Farm*
- Make copies of PPT #2 – *Effect of Behavior on Conflict Resolution* (You will find the PowerPoint link directly below the CLD1-7 KELD facilitator's guides on the KCCL site.)

### Introduction:

When people come in contact with each other, conflict will arise. Sometimes conflict may be needed and it does not have to ruin relationships. Responding to conflict should be based on the circumstances and the potential outcome.

### Introductory Activity:

Think about conflicts that you have had in working on the family farm. Pose these questions to the audience:

- Do you feel that others value your opinion or point of view?
- Do you feel that conflicts are ever resolved? Or are they never really resolved?
- Do you want to discuss better ways to handle these situations?

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### Objective 1: Recognize the characteristics of five conflict management approaches

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### Learning Activity 1:

Give participants the Pre-Test and have them complete it individually. After participants finish the Pre-Test, discuss their responses and share the correct answers during the discussion. Correct Pre-Test.

### Answers:

**Part A**—There are no right or wrong answers in this section. The appropriate answers are what is right within their family farming situation.

Questions 2 and 3 are positive. Have individuals look at their answers—If they have “yes” for 2 and 3,

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talk about how that is positive and they should continue to encourage good communication and sharing responsibility in planning.

Questions 1 and 4 are negative. If they have “yes” for 1 and 4, you can pose the following questions:

- How do you think this affects your family relationship?
- Do you feel like your family relationship affects the farming business? How?
- Can you think of ways to address these conflicts?

Note: Some of these questions and topics can be touchy. Make sure to take caution when posing these questions/facilitating a discussion. Perhaps you have individuals pair up and discuss some of these issues; perhaps you ask for a volunteer to share their situation and have the class discuss. The most important thing to remember is that you shouldn't force anyone to share or put anyone on the spot if he/she is not comfortable. Also, make sure your audience knows that if they wish to talk about anything privately, you would be available at a different time (if you are willing to do that).

**Part B**—Correct answers are: 1) Avoidance, 2) Accommodation, 3) Competition, 4) Compromise, and 5) Collaboration. By show of hands, ask how many got all five correct.

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## Objective 2: Demonstrate the application of appropriate responses to potential organizational conflict situations

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There are a number of ways to respond to conflict, and the response will depend on the situation. Avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising, and collaborating are all responses to conflict. No single response is always right or always wrong.

### Learning Activity 2:

- Give participants a copy of the publication *Understanding and Dealing with Conflict* (CLD1-7).
- Give participants five minutes to study the first page of the publication.
- Review the definitions of the responses to conflict: Avoidance, Accommodation, Competition, Compromise, and Collaboration.
- Show PPT #1—*Responses to a Conflict Situation on the Smith Family Farm*. Ask participants to openly discuss responses to the questions on each slide.
- Summarize Learning Activity 2 with the following questions:

- Does your family have farm business meetings?
- Does your family have a farm transition plan?

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## Objective 3: Analyze the effect of positive and negative emotional communication behaviors toward effective conflict resolution

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Several factors hinder conflict resolution. Many of them have to do with communication or begin with a lack of communication.

### Learning Activity 3:

- Ask participants to read over the second page of the publication *Understanding and Dealing with Conflict* (CLD1-7).
- Show PPT #2—*Effect of Behavior on Conflict Resolution*. Ask participants to respond to each question before clicking on the slide to reveal whether it is a “positive” or “negative” behavior.
- Once you have completed the activity, summarize Learning Activity 3 with these questions:
  - How do you want to be treated in a family discussion?
  - What two words are made from the same six letters (E-I-L-N-S-T)? S-I-L-E-N-T and L-I-S-T-E-N
  - Do you need to be \_\_\_\_\_ before you can listen?

### Summary:

Conflict can be positive or negative; however, often in life we experience conflict negatively. While it isn't possible to manage a life free of conflict, we can manage our response to conflict. Each situation will be different; therefore, the appropriate response will also vary. This makes it all the more important to understand what the most appropriate response should be to diffuse a tough conflict situation.

### References:

- Maxwell, J. (2007). *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.
- Isaacs, S. (2010). *Understanding and Dealing with Conflict* (CLD1-7). Kentucky Extension Leadership Development (KELD). Lexington, KY: Kentucky Cooperative Extension, 2 pp.

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# Pre-Test

## Understanding and Dealing with Conflict

### PART A – QUESTIONS

**Directions:** Circle the answer that fits your family farm operation.

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|---|-----|----|
| 1. Is there conflict in the family?                     | Yes | No |
| 2. Do you have good family communication?               | Yes | No |
| 3. Do you involve all family members in business plans? | Yes | No |
| 4. Does farm transition planning cause problems?        | Yes | No |

### PART B – DEFINITIONS

**Directions:** Match the following words to the correct definition. Write the correct word in the blank. Each word is only used once.

**Words:** Collaboration, Competition, Avoidance, Compromise, Accommodation

- \_\_\_\_\_ is not just the coward's way out. It may be the most appropriate response when the issue is trivial.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the best solution when one party recognizes he or she is wrong. It may also be the appropriate response when the issue is more important to the other person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ means that someone wins and someone loses. This is the appropriate response when the issue is very important and decisive action is needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is an attempt to find common ground. Both sides must be willing to share power or give up some ground when the objective is not worth a fight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is an attempt to satisfy both parties. Both sides must agree on shared solutions and it is the appropriate response when consensus is important.