

Conflict Management and Resolution at Institution

Dr Sujata K Deore

Assistant Professor , Dept of Psychology,
MSS's Ankushrao Tope College, Jalna, 431203 MS

Abstract

This Paper discusses about a counseling centre at an institution where various issues are being addressed that lead to confrontation, disagreement and conflict especially in the choice of career of the students as well as behavioural issues of the students in the campus of MSS's Ankushrao Tope College, Jalna. The Success story of the counseling centre at the college could help and resolve the situation that lead to confrontation, misunderstanding, helplessness. It has also helped many students in choosing the right career path at the right time. The conflict management and resolution are the basic objectives in establishing this centre at the college. This article also reviews the conflict and its resolution as well as management. These agreements and disagreements among individuals and groups in an institution lead to conflict. Conflicts are neither constructive nor disruptive but the ways these are handled in an institution make them either positive or negative. Causes of conflict include difference in perceptions, limited resources, overlapping authority amongst others; while conflict management strategies include accommodation, avoidance, competition and collaboration. Based on this discussion, the paper highlights the success story of a working counseling centre dedicated to the students as well as for all the stakeholders that helps in conflict management and resolution.

Keywords : Conflict, Counseling

Introduction

The world of education is more challenging than ever, and the success of any institution depends on the stakeholders who are part and parcel of the education process.¹ During the process of education human interaction play very important role in making and breaking the activities run in an institution. The stakeholders interaction with each other give birth to agreement, disagreement lead to opinion differences and hence the conflict. Conflict is normal. At some time or other in everyone's life, interactions among the peer members, students, friends as well as relatives do not go as well as it would have. Even if the best intentions, may disagree with others. This may lead to a conflict results into the feel angry, upset, misunderstood or helpless. These strong feelings, create an awkward situation where such confrontation enhances the feel of being threatened and fearful about an individual's personal well-being and ability to function.²

Hoy and Sabo share (1998) that "school climate is a critical component of effective schools". Without a positive or healthy school climate, the organizational structure of the school is missing an important element. This element is critical to the success of a school³.

Success within a school is reflective of stakeholder perceptions, student achievement, relationships, the school environment, school leadership, and many other attributes. School climates may also factor in norms, goals, interpersonal relationships, learning experiences, and organizational structures of the school.⁴

Causes of Conflict

The conflicts can occur due to following situations or causes. information conflicts, values conflicts, interest conflicts, relationship conflicts, and structural conflicts. Information conflicts arise when people have different or insufficient information, or disagree over what data is relevant. Allowing sufficient time to be heard, in a respectful environment facilitated by a neutral person can allow parties to clear up information disparities.

Values conflicts are created when people have perceived or actual incompatible belief systems. Where a person or group tries to impose its values on others or claims exclusive right to a set of values, disputes arise. While values may be non-negotiable, they can be discussed and people can learn to live peacefully and coherently alongside each other.

Interest conflicts are caused by competition over perceived or actual incompatible needs. Such conflicts may occur over issues of money, resources, or time. Parties often mistakenly believe that in order to satisfy their own needs, those of their opponent must be sacrificed. A mediator can help identify ways to dovetail interests and create opportunities for mutual gain.

Relationship conflicts occur when there are misperceptions, strong negative emotions, or poor communication. One person may distrust the other and believe that the other person's actions are motivated by malice or an intent to harm the other. Relationship conflicts may be addressed by allowing each person uninterrupted time to talk through the issues and respond to the other person's concerns.

Structural conflicts are caused by oppressive behaviors exerted on others. Limited resources or opportunity as well as organization structures often promote conflict behavior. The parties may well benefit from mediation since the forum will help neutralize the power imbalance.

Regardless of the cause of conflict, an experienced counsellor help parties shift their focus from fighting to resolution. Since they are necessarily unbiased, neutrals create an environment where parties can trust the process and work toward a solution.

Types of Conflicts

According to Denisi and Griffin), conflict is a process resulting in the perceptions of two parties that are working in opposition to each other in ways that result in feelings of discomfort and/or animosity⁵. Conflict is a process not a singular event. It evolves over time and draws upon previous events. While it may emerge as a result of a specific event, more than likely, it has been brewing for sometime⁶.

Conflict may take various forms and manifest itself at various levels. Kinard (1988) cited in Gebretensay (2002), CRU Institute (1992–2004) and Gonie (1998) for example, distinguishes between three types or levels of conflict⁷. Firstly, conflict may occur within an individual, hence, an intrapersonal conflict. The situations that give rise to such conflict are many. They range from conflicting needs, frustrating situations, failing to achieve aspired goals. Secondly, conflict may occur between individuals who are brought together in work places or elsewhere. Confrontations between individuals must often occur where they have to compete for limited resources. Such conflict is often termed as interpersonal conflict. Thirdly, conflict may occur at the level of groups. There are several situations that may turn groups into rivals. These include situations where groups have to compete for limited resources such as money, personnel and equipment, or when communication difficulties occur. Groups may also experience confrontations because they promote different interests and goals.

- Intrapersonal – A conflict within a person such as a moral dilemma or making a decision.
- Interpersonal – A conflict between two or more people. For example, siblings might disagree about using the car, a boyfriend might argue with a girlfriend, or a co-worker might be difficult to work with.
- Intragroup – A conflict between individuals in a group. For example, a club raising money might not be able to agree about how to allocate the money.
- Intergroup – A conflict between groups. For example, two clubs might dispute who gets to use a particular facility for an event.

There are two aspects of Conflict: Negative Aspects that lead to negative feelings between the parties involved. thus conflict can lead individuals or groups to close themselves off from one another, which sets a bad precedent for future contacts. Conflict can waste time and energy if individuals use poor conflict resolution styles. whereas Positive Aspects Conflict forces the parties involved to examine a problem and work toward a solution. Conflict can help people to gain both new information and new perspectives, and can force us to explore new ideas. When conflict occurs in groups, working together to solve a problem can increase group cohesiveness. The desire both to confront and to solve a problem indicates concern, commitment, and a desire to preserve the relationship.

Conflicts at Institution

Establishing a positive academic culture and getting all stakeholders to rally around common goals could prove difficult without the implementation of the weighty coercive powers available to any person or authority⁵. Thus creating a healthy environment is not possible unless interpersonal conflicts would not be addressed by the competent counselor. The counselor finds common situation where a student and other stakeholders are at positive side and contribute positively to the development of an institution. Some common situations students can find themselves at risk of being in conflict with others include:-

- Differences with classmates on various issues and adjustments'
- Disagreements with the wishes or advice of others
- Miscommunications with classmates, friends, teachers as well as parents or anyone.
- Challenges from Students leaders, Lecturers and other staff as well as classmates and friends in the campus.
- Clashes of opinion when in discussion with classmates, peers, academics when things get too 'personal'
- Lack of facilities and its optimal utility by the students.

Conflict can be an Opportunity and not just a Threat

It has been observed that there are two common reasons why people get into conflict: They do not communicate clearly or listen respectfully and they have different needs or interests which, without some negotiation, do not easily co-exist. Through the process of counseling sessions one can easily perform the conflict management and hence its resolution. By adopting various conflicts management styles, the conflicts can be addressed properly and a student can choose a better career option as well display well conduct in the campus as well as off the campus.

Conflict Management Styles

Controlling

When the controlling style, is being adopted conflict is managed by by hard bargaining or in terms of "might makes right." Someone whose conflict management style is controlling pursues personal concerns at another's expense, the controlling style of conflict management intimidates people, and they may be afraid either to admit to problems or to give you important information.

Collaborating

In collaborating style, conflict is managed by negotiating and may believe that two heads are better than one. The collaborating style of conflict management allows to learn from either's perspective. The collaborating style of conflict management may be unsuitable either for minor decisions or when time is limited.

Compromising

The compromising style manage conflict by splitting the difference so that the solution partially satisfies both parties. The compromising style of conflict management is useful when other styles fail, for fast decision-making on minor disagreements, or when two equally strong parties commit to mutually exclusive goals.

Accommodating

An accommodating style, manage conflict by soft bargaining. The accommodating style is useful when you see that you are wrong or when harmony is most important to you. However, if you use the accommodating style, others may not address your concerns.

Avoiding

Avoiding style, manage conflict by leaving well enough alone or by not addressing the conflict. You may either withdraw from the situation or postpone confrontation.

While communicating with the student the counselor follows following five steps so that the process of counselling becomes less taxing more towards friendly, free and open minded that helps the subject (the stakeholder) to be more close to the counselor and manage the conflict successfully by following the right conflict resolution process. Situational Diagnosis Expectations Resource Style Personal Development.

Case Study –Counseling Centre MSS's Ankushrao Tope College, Jalna

Mss's Ankushrao Tope College, situated in Jalna city (Maharashtra). The College offers multidisciplinary co education for UG, PG and research. It has established a full fledged counseling centre under the Department of Psychology in the year 2016. The Prime objective behind the establishment of the counseling centre is to help the students and other stakeholders to address their psychological and career related issues as well as learn conflict

management and its resolution for the psychological well being of the students as well as stakeholders. A well qualified and trained staff has been shouldered the responsibility of the counseling centre. The centre. The psychological testing of the students, IQ testing, Educational Counseling, Career Counseling, etc. are the task performed by the centre. The following table shows the actual number beneficiaries includes students as well as stakeholders. An Interpersonal as well as Intrapersonal conflict management and resolution has also been addressed through an individual as well as group counseling. The centre has organised various activities for an overall development of the students as well as their psychological well being. During the Covid 19 pandemic various online activities were carried out for all the stake holders. The team of counselors from an institution has helped covid affected people and relatives in many ways for their emotional settlement and adjustment.

Table 1. Number of students benefitted (Individual Counseling) at counseling centre (MSS's Ankushrao Tope College, jalna)

Sr No	Year	No of Students/stakeholders	Remarks	Any other
01	2016-17	17	IQ testing, Psychological Testing Behavioural Counseling, Career counseling, etc.	Few of the chronic cases have been referred to Govt Civil Hospital
02	2017-18	10	Psychological Counseling, Anxiety, Emotional Management, IQ and Aptitude Test, etc.	
03	2018-19	09	Career counseling, Psychological Testing , IQ test, , DBDA Anxiety, etc.	
04	2019-20	09	Career Counseling, Psychological Testing, Mild Depression , Testing	Referred to Govt Civil Hospital, Jalna
05	2020-21	15	Psychological Testing, Anxiety, Career Counseling, Examination Guidance	
06	2021-22	23	Depression, IQ Test, Covid 19 related issues.	

Table 2. Activities of Group Counseling at MSS's Ankushrao Tope College, Jalna.

Sr No	Year	Name of the Activity/Title	No. of Students Benefitted	
			Class	No of Students
01	2017-18	Personality Development –A Lecture. Mental Health and Well Being. Career Planning and Management Stress management	UG FY –	120
			Psychology	130
			UG TY	150
			XII	165
02	2018-19	Personal Growth Interpersonal Skills Study Skills and Examination Anxiety Wellness	All UG	350
03	2020-21	Adjusting to College Relationship with friends and other Time Management Career Guidance Mental Health and Remedies Mental wellbeing of youths Personality Development Covid related Mental Health Issues	XI	345
			XII	140
			UG	550
			All students	
				260

04	2021-22	Smart Girl Workshop Emotional Empowerment Social Challenges Lif Skills Understanding of Self Friendship and Temptation Choices and Decision Menstruation and Hygiene	All Adoloscent Girls of Jalna District	1500
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Conclusion

The conflict management and resolution process carried out by the counseling centre at MSS's College has been proved to be a good attempt. The activities at the centre are well planned and lead to a more satisfying, effective professional relationship among peer members in the campus. An intrapersonal type of dilemma has also been addressed at the centre by way of an individual counseling. whereas interpersonal and intragroup conflicts have been successfully attempted towards resolution in group counseling by conducting purposeful activities throughout the year in the campus. The centre also organised various activities for all the stakeholders to build a healthy relationship with each other to cultivate and environment that lead to an overall devoplement of the students. The centre is committed to design the best fit academic climate and psychological well being in an institution.

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