

## ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGY

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### Introduction

Some argue that EQ is more important in the work place than IQ. In the work place, there are constant interactions which are occurring among the people who work there. While some of these interactions are positive, others are negative. The key aspect, teachers and principals must understand is that over time, each of these interactions will have a positive or negative effect on the institutions as a whole. Having said that, the key fact that must be considered in order to make these interactions more positive is emotional intelligence. Humans are emotional creatures, and this is the first key towards understanding EI. Workplace conflict is an unavoidable situation that can occur to every employee in the organization.

Misunderstanding can happen between employees or even the employer and employees. If the goals of the employees are not in line with that of the management, this usually becomes the common root of conflict. Dealing with this kind of conflict is easy because between the two parties, the management takes the lead in getting to a resolution. However, in cases wherein employees disagree with each other, managing the conflict may be quite challenging. In some situations, if the employees possess the proper conflict resolution skills, conflict is dealt with smoothly.

Researchers in EI express the view that a lack of emotional intelligence is one of the leading causes of conflict in our society. It is difficult to argue with this logic. At the root of all conflict is a lack of sensitivity on the part of one or both parties. Sensitivity is directly related to one's emotional intelligence. One of the biggest things that people will encounter in their place of work is an arrogant or intimidating attitude. While this problem may sometimes come from co-workers, it may also come from managers as well. Dealing with co-workers is

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relatively simple, but dealing with managers can be a lot harder.

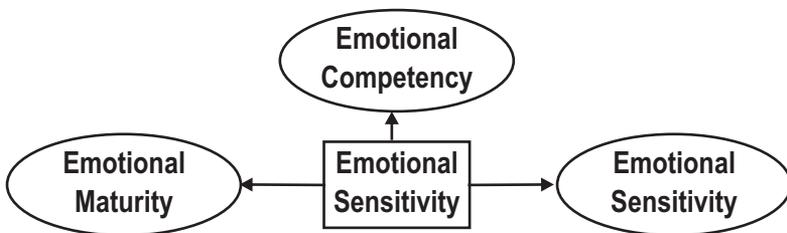
### Emotional intelligence

To understand the concept of EI, one must know something about intelligence and emotion (*Mayer et al., 2004a*). Intelligence represents the abilities to carry out abstract thought, to solve problems, and to adapt to the environment (*Wechsler, 1997*). This ability to adapt is represented by a commonality referred to as a *g* (*Spearman, 1927*). A *g* is the abbreviation for the general intelligence factor, and is a widely used construct in psychology. A *g* helps quantify scores of intelligence tests. Spearman (1927) theorized that two factors can help explain intelligence tests. The first is the factor specific to an individual mental task making a person more skilled at one task than another. The second factor is a general factor that governs performance on all cognitive tasks.

**Goleman (1998)**. Emotional intelligences is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

**Singh (2003)** has proposed an operational definition of Emotional Intelligence in the Indian Context. According to him, emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to appropriately and successfully respond to a vast variety of emotional stimuli being elicited from the inner self and immediate environment. Emotional intelligence constitutes three psychological dimensions- *Emotional competency, emotional maturity and emotional sensitivity*, which motivate individual to recognize truthfully, interpret honestly and handle tactfully the dynamics of human behavior.

These dimensions are portrayed in figure.1.1



### **Nurturing emotional intelligence leverages success:**

*“Emotional intelligence affects just about everything you do at work. Even when you work in a solitary setting, how well you work has a lot to do with how will you discipline and motivate yourself.”*

**Daniel Goleman (1998)**

Developing emotional intelligence enables to achieve better outcomes in leadership, management and supervision.

E.I improves productivity, communication, organizational climate, team work and health.

The acquired proficiency in selected emotional intelligence competencies helps to achieve measurably improved performance.

Developing E.I raises individual strengths and areas for improvement.

E.I enables to align actions with personal and organizational core values.

E.I facilitates improving communication by using tools for more effective listening and speaking, especially in difficult situations.

E.I enhances effectiveness in working with others and improves efficiency in decision making. It creates healthy climate and builds up the morale. E.I encourages using one's intuitive intelligence.

### **Conflict resolution strategy**

Conflict resolution in an organization, does not necessarily refer to strategies that avoid, diminish or erase conflict. On the contrary it involves designing effective strategies aiming at minimizing the dysfunctional elements of conflict and the parallel enforcement of the functional elements of conflict (*Menon et al, 1997*).

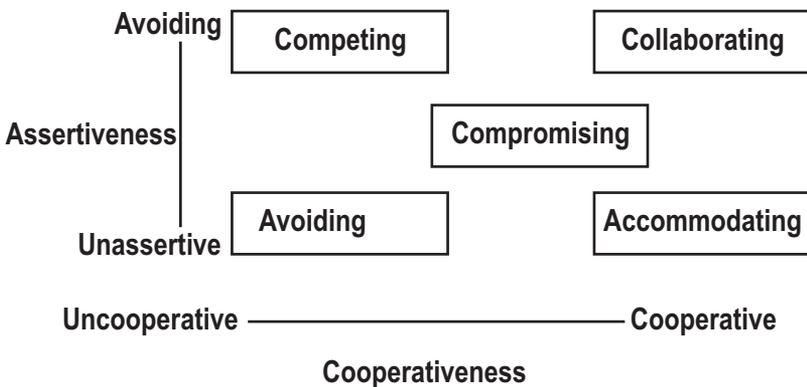
**Blake & Mouton (1964)** were the first authors to develop a conceptual scheme for classifying the styles for handling intra-organizational conflict. The pivotal notion in their model was the extent to which the manager is concerned for production or for people. Their idea was further developed by *Thomas (1976)* who placed emphasis on the intentions of the party, namely:

cooperativeness (i.e., attempting to satisfy the other party's concerns), and assertiveness, (i.e., attempting to satisfy one's own concerns).

**Rahim (1983)** built on that earlier seminal work and considered conflict-handling styles on two dimensions, which represent motivational orientations of individuals in conflict situations: concern for self, and concern for others. The former dimension refers to the degree (high or low) to which a person attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns in conflict resolution. The latter dimension refers to the degree (high or low) to which a person desires to satisfy the concerns of others.

**According to Thomas (2002)**, assertiveness and cooperativeness are the most basic dimensions for describing the choices in a conflict situation. They form the two-dimensional space in which we can locate conflict handling behavior. Assertiveness and cooperativeness are separate, independent dimensions. They are not opposites of each other. Assertiveness is the degree to which a person tries to satisfy his own concerns. Assertiveness might mean trying to meet one's needs or get support for his ideas. Cooperativeness is the degree to which a person tries to satisfy other person's concerns. It might mean helping the other person meet his or her needs or being receptive to the other person's ideas.

Representation of the five major combinations of assertiveness and cooperativeness that are possible in a conflict situation.



(Fig.-1.2) Two dimensional model of five conflict management styles. (Thomas 1976)

**Competing** is assertive and uncooperative. A person with competing style of conflict management tries to satisfy his own concerns at the other person's expense. : People who tend towards a competitive style take a firm stand, and know what they want. They usually operate from a position of power, drawn from things like position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability. This style can be useful when there is an emergency and a decision needs to be made fast; when the decision is unpopular; or when defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly. However it can leave people feeling bruised, unsatisfied and resentful when used in less urgent situations

**Collaborating** is both assertive and cooperative, whereby a person tries to find a win-win solution that completely satisfies both people's concerns. People tending towards a collaborative style try to meet the needs of all people involved. These people can be highly assertive but unlike the competitor, they cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important. This style is useful when you need to bring together a variety of viewpoints to get the best solution; when there have been previous conflicts in the group; or when the situation is too important for a simple trade-off

**Compromising** is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. A person with this style of conflict management tries to find an acceptable settlement that only partially satisfies both people's concerns. : People who prefer a compromising style try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone. Everyone is expected to give up something, and the compromiser himself or herself also expects to relinquish something. Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming

**Avoiding** is both unassertive and uncooperative and a person who uses this conflict management style sidesteps the conflict without trying to satisfy either person's concern. This style indicates a willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs. People tending towards this style seek to evade the conflict entirely. This style is typified by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decisions, and not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings. It can be appropriate when victory is impossible, when the controversy is trivial, or when someone else is in a better position to solve the

problem. However in many situations this is a weak and ineffective approach to take.

**Accommodating** is unassertive and cooperative and such a person attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns at the expense of his own. The accommodator often knows when to give in to others, but can be persuaded to surrender a position even when it is not warranted. This person is not assertive but is highly cooperative. Accommodation is appropriate when the issues matter more to the other party, when peace is more valuable than winning, or when you want to be in a position to collect on this "favor" you gave. However people may not return favors, and overall this approach is unlikely to give the best outcomes .

Once you understand the different styles, you can use them to think about the most appropriate approach (or mixture of approaches) for the situation you're in. You can also think about your own instinctive approach, and learn how you need to change this if necessary. Ideally you can adopt an approach that meets the situation, resolves the problem

**Conclusion :** As staff usually work in team and there are various types of conflict to which they need to respond .Conflict is probably embedded with different kind of feelings, so it is important to understand whether different interpersonal conflict resolution styles are associated with ones ability to identify, understand, use and regulate emotion.

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