

Managing conflict successfully

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What is conflict?




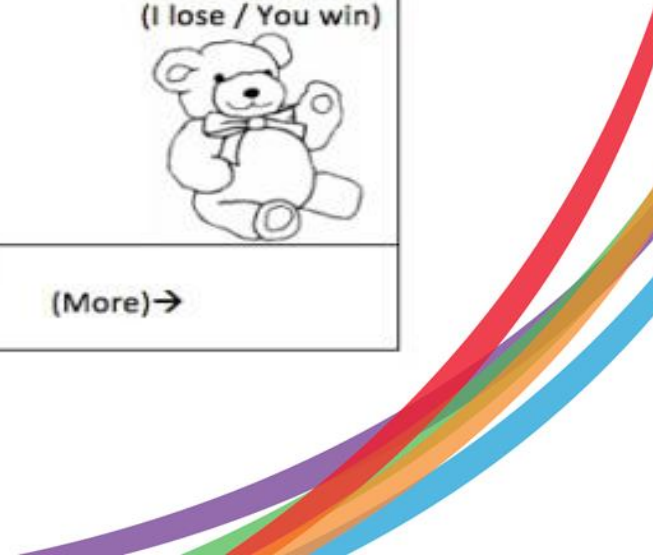
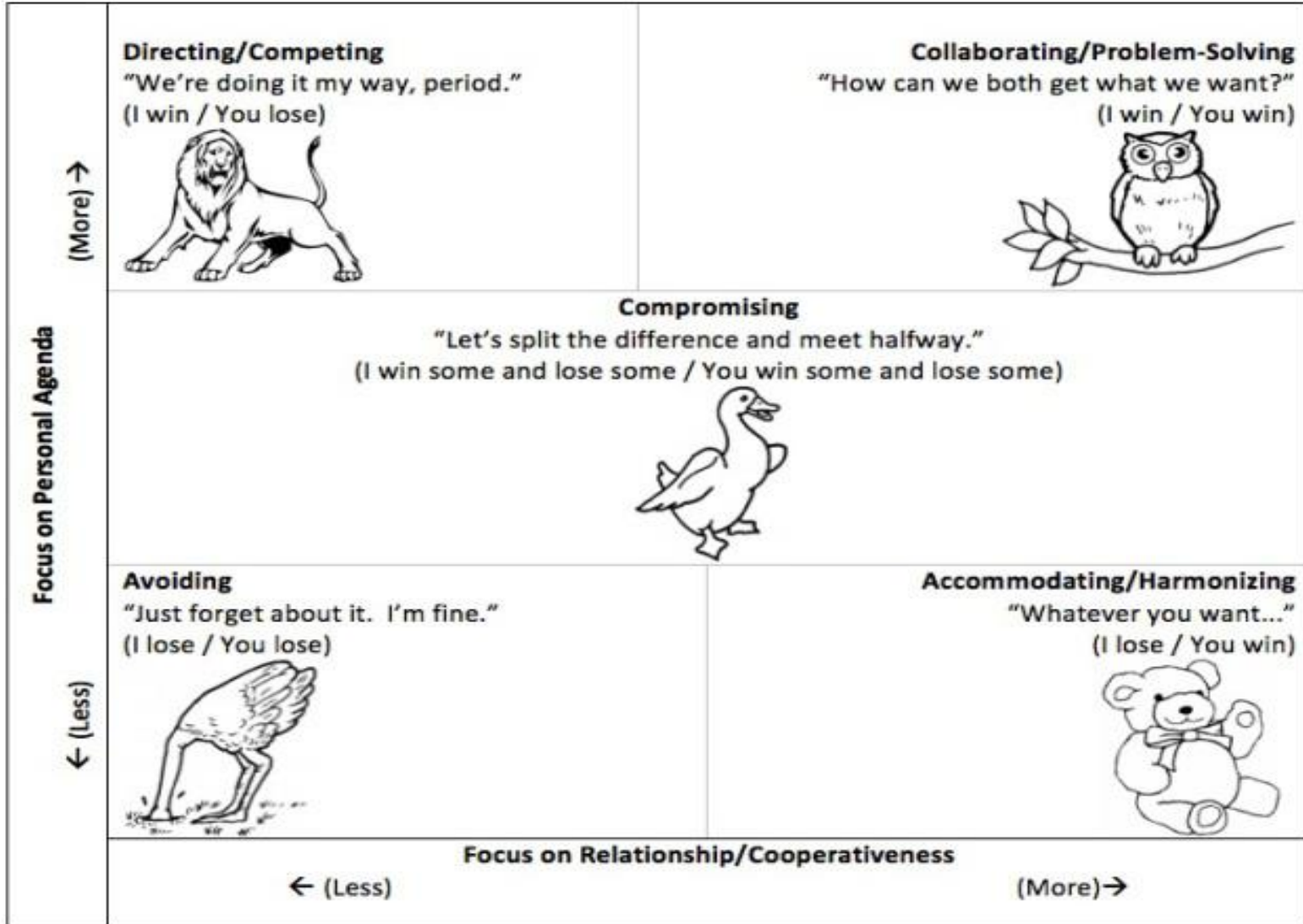
- Something that occurs when people's interests or points of view clash.
- Usually in the shape of a serious disagreement or argument
- Some degree of conflict is natural in life
- “the way out is through”

Today...


- Practical strategies & effective behaviours for managing and transforming conflict
 - What's your personal conflict style (Thomas - Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument)
 - Questions...
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What is conflict like for you?

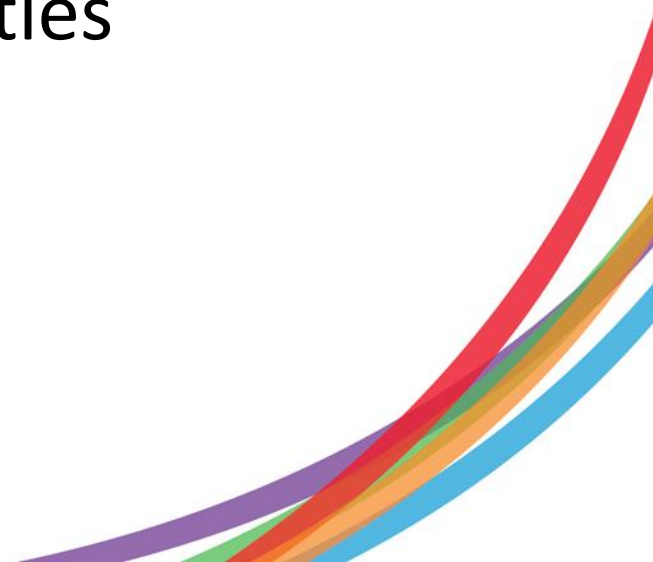
- Think about a conflict situation you have been in recently
 - Explain the nature of the conflict. What led up to it. What happened during the conflict?
 - What behaviours did you display during the conflict?
 - How did you feel during the conflict?
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Conflict situation

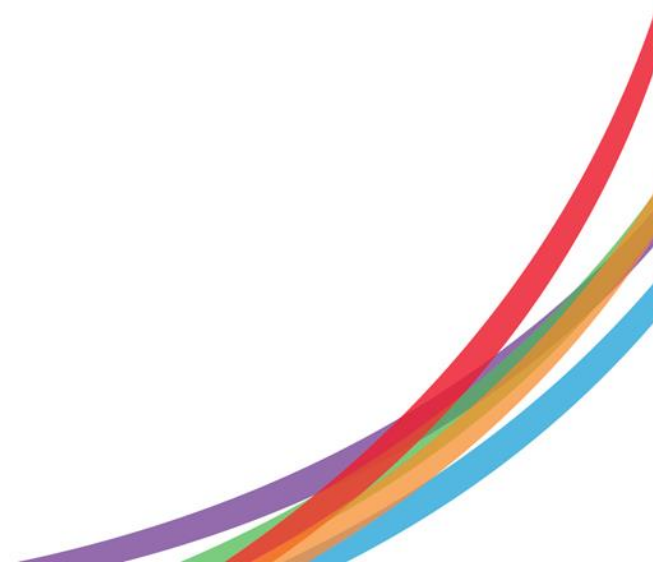
- You're sharing a house with someone who is very untidy. It's driving you crazy...
 - **Avoidance** – just ignore it. Maybe it will pass.
 - **Accommodation** – You accept the mess & put your own needs to one side
 - **Competition** – the mess is outrageous. You go to war and threaten court action
 - **Compromise** – You agree some joint standards of tidiness. Not perfect but an improvement
 - **Collaboration** – You both go halves on a cleaner!
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Resolving conflict – some practical advice

- Introduce a third party mediator
 - Use a neutral environment
 - Ground rules
 - Ensure there is listening time
 - Needs of the two (or more) parties
 - Work towards an agreement
 - Don't leave anything unsaid
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Resolution – obstacles - impasse

- Take a break
- Park the issue temporary
- Summary of what's been said
- What are the parties' fears



Reaching agreement


- When?
- What should it include / look like?
- Who sees the agreement/ shares it?
- What if the parties feel the agreement's no longer working?



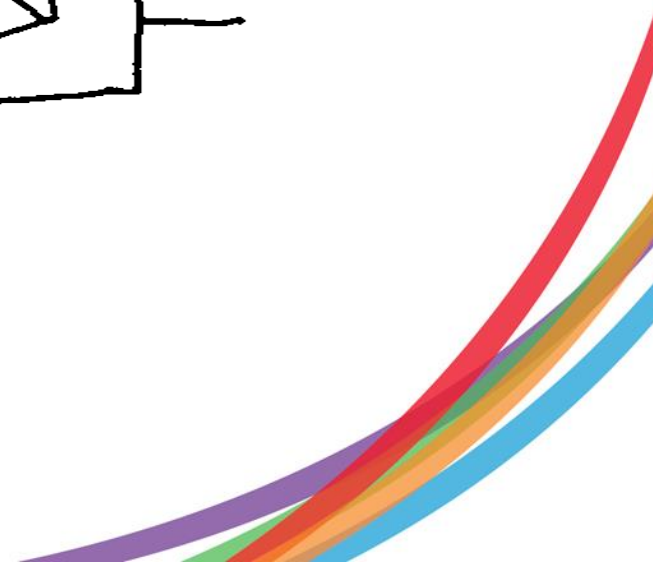
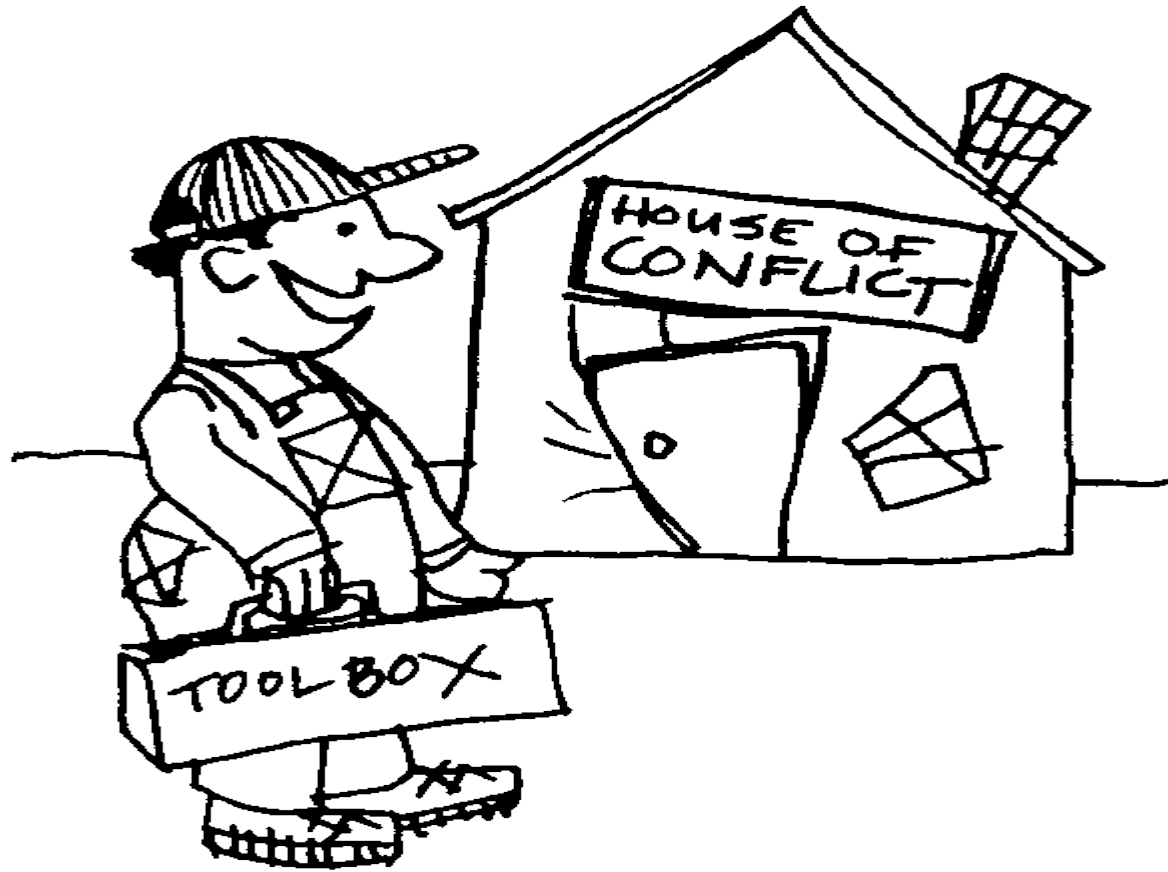
The conflict iceberg



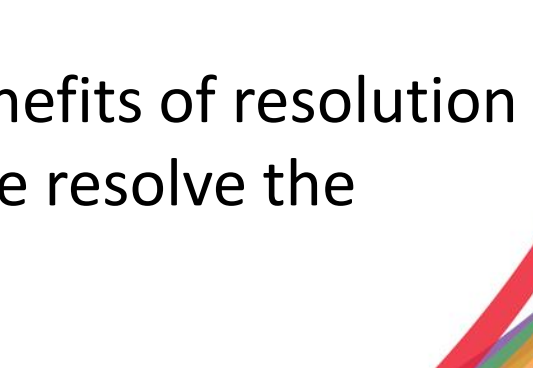
What is conflict like for you?

- Go back to the conflict situation you discussed a few minutes go...
 - What style were you using?
 - What was going on beneath the surface?
 - What would you do differently if it happened again?
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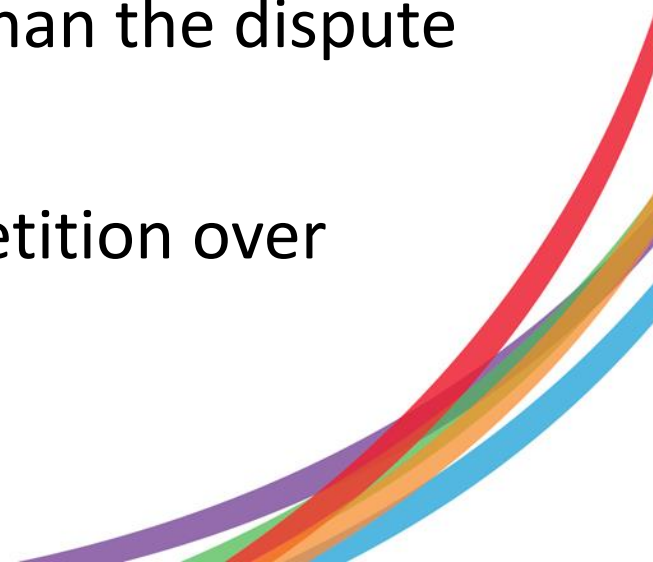
Practical strategies



Avoidance (ostrich)

- **In this strategy you**
 - Ignore the issue, joked about it, deny its existence
 - **Disadvantages**
 - Issue remains unresolved
 - Loss of self esteem
 - Stores up problems for the future
 - **When it might be useful**
 - Risks of confrontation outweigh benefits of resolution
 - When it's better to let someone else resolve the conflict
 - It's not worth getting involved
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Accommodation (teddy)


- **In this strategy you...**
 - Give in, deny own needs, place harmony first
 - **When it might be useful**
 - When someone is clearly right or wrong
 - When you want leverage for a future conflict
 - Relationship is more important than the dispute
 - **Disadvantages**
 - Issue remains unresolved, competition over “niceness”, no creative solutions
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Competition (lion)


- **In this strategy you**
 - Make hostile remarks, threaten, have verbal arguments
- **When it might be useful**
 - Total victory is desired, relationship is of no value, when style is rewarded, decisive action is necessary
- **Disadvantages**
 - Damages relationships, resentment, desire for revenge, conflict can escalate



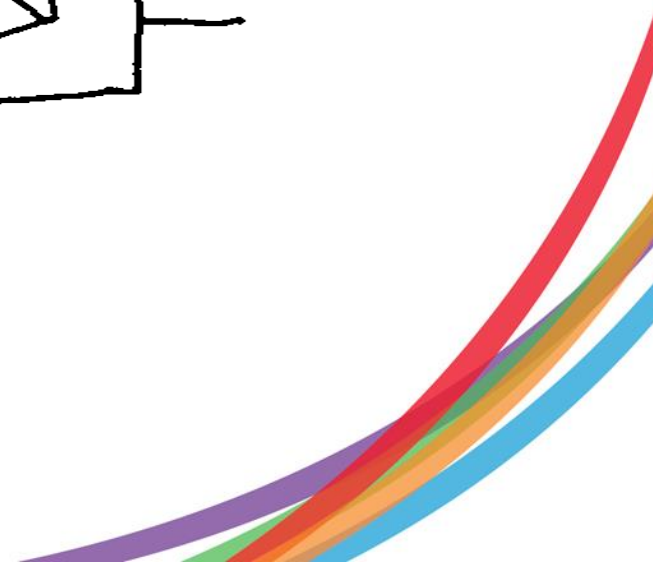
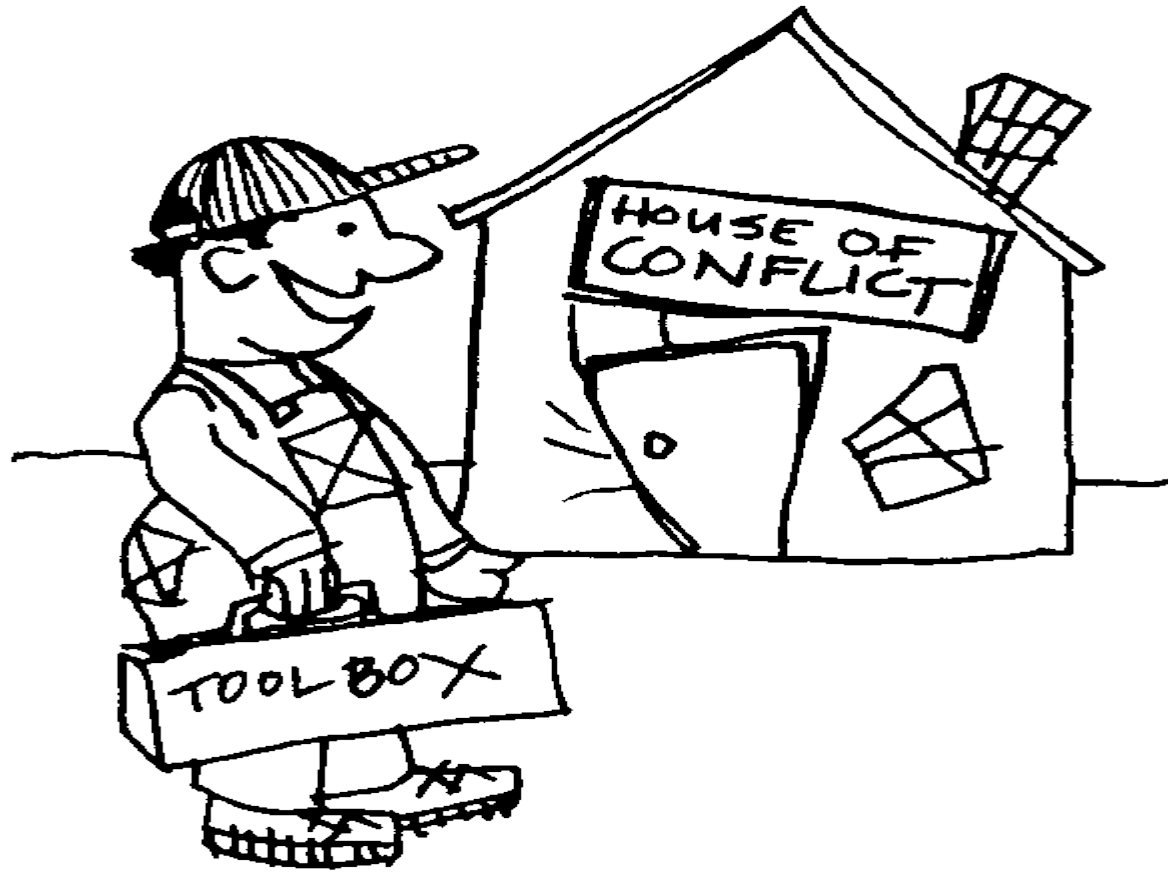
Compromise (duck)

- **In this strategy you**
 - Give and take, find the “middle ground”, appeal to fairness
 - **When it might be useful**
 - Saves time and energy, seems fair to everyone
 - **Disadvantages**
 - Not everyone satisfied, issue may not be resolved, underlying issues pop up later stage
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Collaboration (owl)

- **In this strategy you**
 - Listen to opposing views, deal with emotions, have open and honest dialogue, seek input from others
 - **When it might be useful**
 - Creative and new solutions needed, relationship is important, underlying issues need to be addressed, issues too important to compromise
 - **Disadvantages**
 - Takes time and energy, collaborative person may appear weak to an aggressive person, both people need to be committed
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Effective behaviours



Effective behaviours for conflict transformation

- **Non verbal communication**
 - gestures, eye contact, nods, tone of voice
- **Acknowledging**
 - I can see this is difficult
 - We seem to have reached a stalemate
- **Ask questions** – gets to underlying issues
 - What's important for you with this issue?
 - What would be the best outcome for you?
 - What do we need to move forward?
- **Summarise** – shows understanding
 - So what you're saying is...
 - Can I just check that what you're saying is...



If it starts to get heated

- **Self management**
 - When you start to lose it
 - Stress response - Fight/flight/freeze
 - 7/11 breathing
 - Notice, pause, purposefully act
- **Naming**
 - I can see everyone's getting angry/frustrated/annoyed. What do we want to do?
 - We've got a difference in opinion, what shall we do?
- **If it all gets really bad**
 - Return to ground rules
 - Take a break




Managing the environment

- Good housekeeping in meetings
 - Timing, agenda, minutes
- Establishing groundrules
 - Professional behaviours
 - Can agree as a group
 - Respect, listening



Facilitation tips

- “to make easier” – help a group achieve a common task
 - **Direction** – sets ground rules, keeps things on track, handles disruptions
 - **Tone** – encourages respectful and non judgmental attitudes
 - **Overview** – looks from different angles
 - **Sense of progress** – reminds what has been achieved, builds morale, contradicts “we are going nowhere” feelings
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Recap

- Conflict is a natural aspect of human interactions
 - We have a default style which we can choose to step out of
 - We can use practical strategies and effective behaviours to make conflict constructive rather than destructive
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