

— CHAPTER TWO —

OVERVIEW OF THE MODELS

The Toolbox will be profiling the following eight conflict analysis models, eight different lenses or perspectives from which the practitioner can assess situations of conflict.

WHY THESE EIGHT MODELS?

There are, potentially, a lot of models, of conflict maps, that can help practitioners diagnose and intervene in conflict. So why these eight? These models were chosen for a variety of reasons. First, as models, they are especially well balanced between simplicity and complexity. The Dynamics of Trust model represents a great deal of complexity that attribution theory brings to the table, yet does so in a functional and useful way. The Triangle of Satisfaction takes the idea of interests to great depth and subtlety, yet does so in a way that can be applied in real time conflict situations.

Second, they were chosen for their clarity in giving direction and guidance for intervention. Each model offers the practitioner clear, focused ideas on what will help in the conflict, and why.

Finally, these models represent a wide range of different ways to approach and look at conflict. Each model brings a different and potentially useful angle on the problem, as follows:

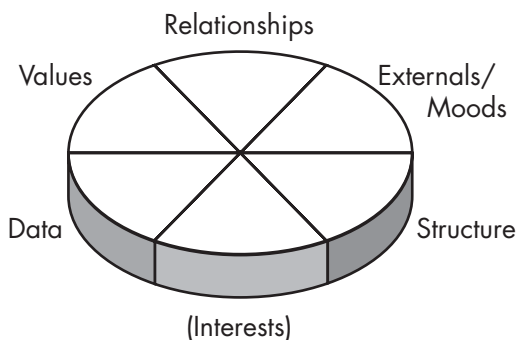
- **The Circle of Conflict** looks at different causes or “drivers” to conflict;
- **The Triangle of Satisfaction** specifically looks at different types of interests, and takes that assessment to a significantly deeper and more functional level;
- **The Boundary** model looks at conflict from a unique perspective, giving insight into the almost invisible world of managing boundaries, a daily occurrence for all of us;
- **The Interest/Rights/Power** model is foundational to the field of negotiation and conflict resolution, and helps by categorizing the various processes we use to manage conflict along with the consequences of each of those types;
- **The Dynamics of Trust** model tackles the critical issue of how trust is created, how trust is eroded, and how lack of trust impacts the resolution process;
- **The Dimensions** model looks broadly at three different “layers” or areas where we can focus our work, and how those three areas affect the resolution and recurrence of conflict;
- **The Social Style** model looks at conflict through the ubiquitous personality lens, and brings clear direction on managing and resolving communication and interpersonal “style” issues;
- **The Moving Beyond** model looks at the emotional process people go through when trying to let go of conflict and move on, a critical process for achieving resolution.

This range of models is not complete, and is not intended to be. The Toolbox is intended as a foundation, a good beginning at providing practitioners with roadmaps, “conflict maps,” that can assist them as they grow and develop.

Below is a very brief description of each model before moving into the individual chapters.

MODEL #1—THE CIRCLE OF CONFLICT¹

The Circle of Conflict is a model that diagnoses and categorizes the underlying causes or “drivers” of the given conflict. It categorizes these causes and drivers into one of five categories: Values, Relationships, Moods/Externals, Data and Structure. Further, the model offers concrete suggestions for working with each of these drivers, and directs the practitioner toward Data, Structure, and the sixth category, Interests, as the focus for resolution.



MODEL #2 – THE TRIANGLE OF SATISFACTION²

The Triangle model is an extension of the Circle of Conflict, though it easily operates as an independent framework for the practitioner. This model deepens the area of Interests, suggesting that there are three distinct types of interests: Result or substantive interests, Process or procedural interests, and Psychological or emotional interests. The model offers specific strategies for working with the three different types of interests in conflict situations.



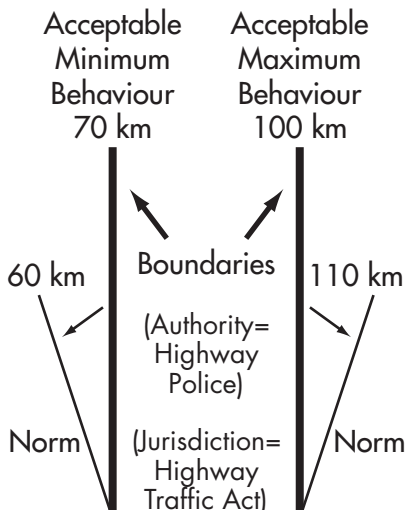
1. Adapted with permission from CDR Associates, Boulder, Colorado.

2. Used with permission of CDR Associates, Boulder, Colorado.

MODEL #3—THE BOUNDARY MODEL³

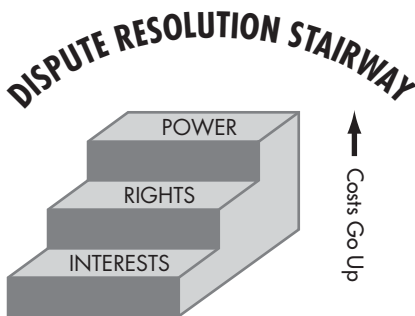
The Boundary model, similar to the Circle, assesses the root cause of conflict from a structural and behavioural point of view, but suggests that conflict occurs because of how people relate to and interact with boundaries.

Our lives are filled with boundaries of many kinds, and may include rules, laws, contracts, cultural expectations, norms, and limits of any sort. It suggests that conflict occurs when parties disagree on boundaries, expand or break boundaries, or refuse to accept the authority and jurisdiction inherent in a boundary. It also offers specific approaches to work with conflict caused by boundary issues.



MODEL #4—INTERESTS/RIGHTS/POWER MODEL

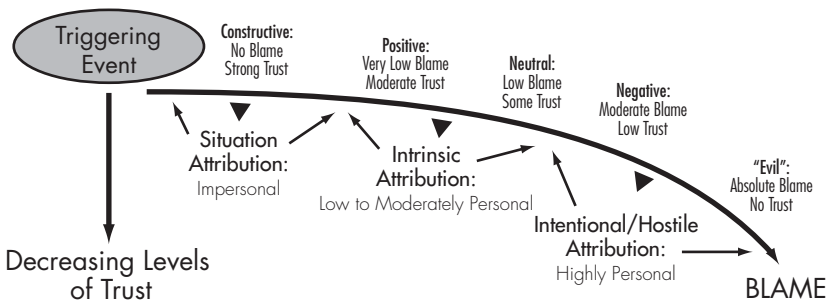
The Interests/Rights/Power model does not assess the root causes of conflict, but rather focuses on the different processes people use to deal with conflict, categorizing all approaches to conflict as being one of three types – Interest-based, Rights-based or Power-based. The I/R/P model diagnoses the characteristics of each of the three types. Finally, the model offers broad direction on working with each of the three different processes, along with a guide for choosing effective types of processes for resolving conflict.



3. Used with permission of Dr. Larry Prevost, Sarnia, Ontario.

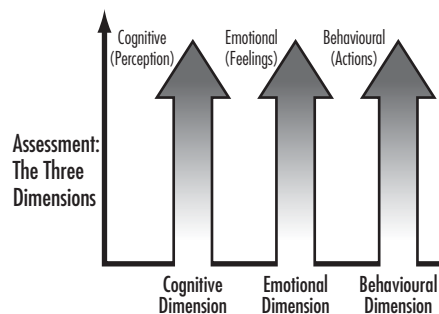
MODEL #5—THE DYNAMICS OF TRUST

This model looks at the dynamics of trust and how we attribute blame. Attribution Theory, one of the most important areas of psychological research, is boiled down to help practitioners understand how trust is broken, and how blame and lack of trust can make resolution difficult if not impossible. The model also gives the practitioner specific strategies for rebuilding enough trust to facilitate the resolution process, through activities such as Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), procedural trust, and attributional retraining.



MODEL #6—THE DIMENSIONS MODEL⁴

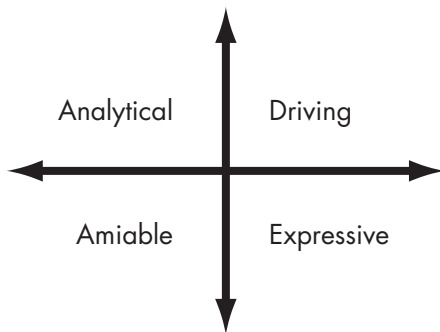
The Dimensions model takes the broadest look at diagnosing conflict by proposing that conflict takes place along three different “dimensions.” These three dimensions are the Cognitive dimension (how we perceive and think about the conflict), the Emotional dimension (how we feel about the conflict) and the Behavioural dimension (how we act or what we do about the conflict). The model identifies how separating a conflict into these dimensions can help the practitioner intervene, and offers specific strategies for working with each of the dimensions.



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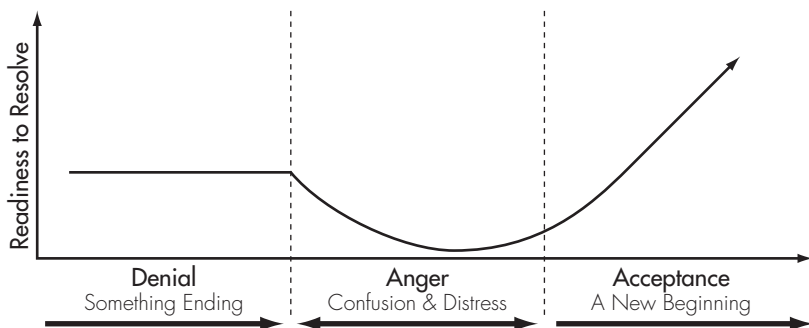
MODEL #7—THE SOCIAL STYLES MODEL⁵

This model is significantly different from all the rest of the models because it focuses on understanding personality conflict, and conflict related to personal communication styles. Based on research similar to the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator but offering a much simpler framework for assessing personal styles, the Social Styles model suggests four basic personality and communication styles, or types, and offers clear skills and strategies for working with these personality characteristics in conflict situations.



MODEL #8—MOVING BEYOND CONFLICT

One of the main barriers to resolution comes when people can't let the conflict go and move on with their lives. A dispute can become such an important part of an individual's life that he or she will not allow it to end. It feels as if something important is being lost. This is very similar to the process of grieving, and the Moving Beyond model helps identify the stages or steps parties often must go through in order to let it go and move beyond it.



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