

## **Unhelpful Assumptions about Conflict**

[Wilmot, W. & Hocker, J. (2001). Interpersonal conflict (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)

**Harmony is normal, conflict is abnormal.**

**Conflict is the result of personal pathology.**

**Conflict should never be escalated.**

**Good conflict management is polite and orderly.**

**Anger is the main emotion in conflict.**

**There is only one “right” way to resolve differences.**

## **BELIEFS ABOUT CONFLICT: A NEW PARADIGM**

[Mediation Services (2008). Interpersonal conflict resolution training manual. Winnipeg]

### **CONFLICT IS OKAY**

Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of life and happens in the best personal and professional relationships. In itself, conflict is neither bad nor good. It can be constructive if handled well, destructive if handled poorly.

### **PEOPLE HAVE CHOICES IN HOW THEY RESPOND TO CONFLICT**

I generally do not choose to have conflict but I can choose how I respond.  
Others typically respond to me in the ways I invite them to. The kind of space I create for others to show up in is up to me.

### **PEOPLE CAN SOLVE THEIR OWN CONFLICTS**

People are problem-solvers in most of their daily roles, both at work and at home.  
The most appropriate resolution typically comes from those involved in the conflict.  
Resolving a conflict builds both skill and confidence that can be of use in the next situation.

### **I ONLY HAVE PART OF THE STORY - I HAVE PART OF THE STORY**

Understanding what has happened requires every voice in the conflict to be heard.  
I can see things that don't exist and I can ignore things that do exist.

### **WE ALL CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CONFLICTS CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY**

Just because I am offended does not mean that I should be.  
Don't believe everything you think.  
The stronger my emotional response the more likely it is about me.

### **THERE CAN BE “WIN/WIN” RESOLUTIONS**

Assuming competition limits the perceived outcomes to a win/lose situation.  
It is possible to shift another's competitive energy towards a problem-solving focus.

### **RECONCILIATION IS POSSIBLE IN A WIDE RANGE OF SITUATIONS**

It is possible to work through issues and find reconciliation even in situations of long-standing conflict within families, communities or workplaces.