

civic engage

From Controversy to Collaboration: Working Through Conflict in Public Engagement

May 31, 10:30 – 12:00
Local Government Leadership Academy Webinar

SFU

CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

 LGLA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Agenda

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Case study: *Tofino***
- 3. Strategies for working through conflict**
- 4. Summary: Key takeaways**
- 5. Open discussion/Q&A starts at 11:30am**
- 6. Close**

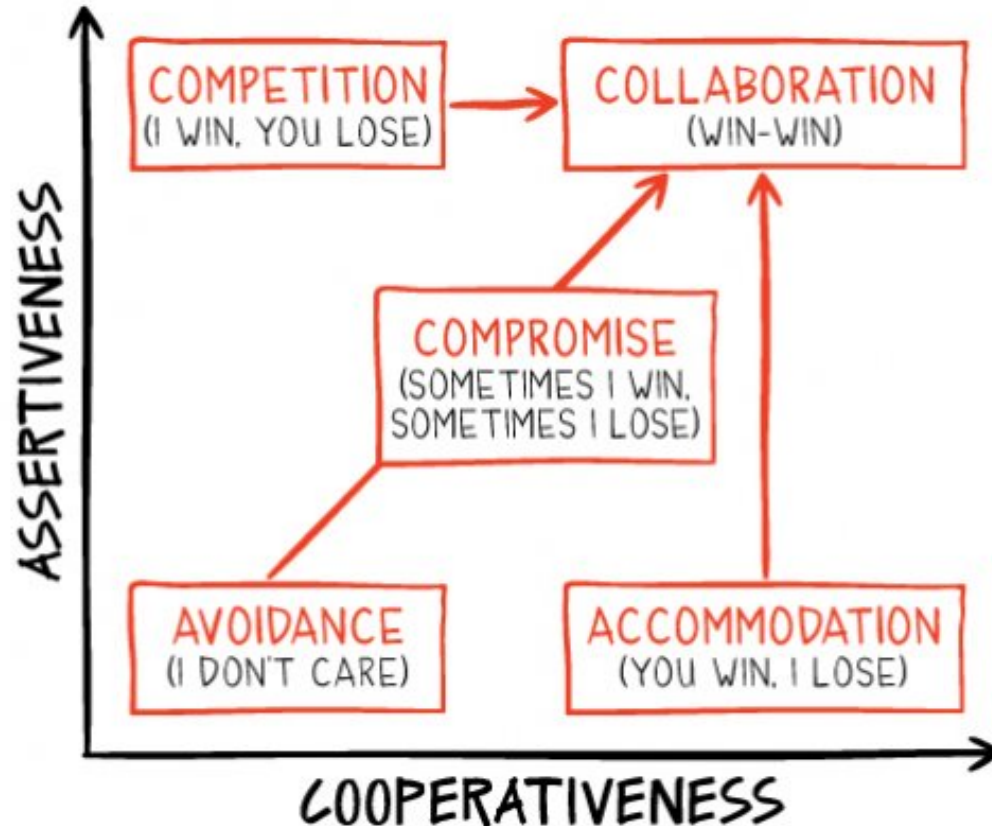
Can conflict be productive?



What is conflict?



What is collaboration?



Model: Kenneth Crow, DRM Associates

Graphic: www.collectivenext.com

From positions to interests

Positions	Interests
"I want the orange."	"I want to make orange juice." "I need the zest for my muffins."
"I don't want this land developed."	"I need a place for my cows to graze."
"We need to close this road to all cars."	"I want to be able to cycle to work safely."
"I oppose the new tax."	"I am worried about my family's budget." "I want public money to be spent more carefully."

Case Study 1: Tofino



Josie Osborne,
Mayor, District of Tofino



Dialogue as a conflict resolution tool

- Help resolve conflicts through mutual learning and understanding
- Establish, maintain or improve relationships
- Relate decision-making to values

Dialogue as a conflict resolution tool

Strategy 1 – Building shared understanding:

- Create a common fact base
- Listen to understand issues, positions, interests
- Make information accessible

Example page from
the Centre for Dialogue
'Moving in Metro'
Discussion Guide –
contains facts &
stakeholder
perspective

By 2040
1 million
more people
will live in Metro Vancouver
(Metro Vancouver, 2011)

**Proportion of household
expenditure spent on**
transportation **18%**
for residents of
Metro Vancouver
(Metro Vancouver, 2013)

In 2011, 73% of all trips
taken by residents of Metro Vancouver were by
automobile 
(TransLink, 2011)

Metro Vancouver provides about
\$4.5 billion
in yearly subsidies to the transportation network
(TransLink, 2013)

**To me,
road
pricing
means...**



*"I spend the entire day
on the road, and the
satisfaction of my customers
depends on being able to
get them their deliveries
on time. Fewer cars on the
road is great news for me. It
means I can get to where I'm
going faster and make more
deliveries in a day. That's
sure to make a difference to
my bottom line."*

Alex, delivery driver

Dialogue as a conflict resolution tool

Strategy 2 – Hosting a respectful conversation:

- Create a neutral, safe space:
 - Create welcoming atmosphere
 - Establish clear ground rules
- Ground the conversation in personal experiences (e.g. using “I” language, sharing stories)
- Surface values and interests

Example: Moving in Metro



Responding to detractors

- Make sure interests are being heard
- Uphold ground rules
- Ensure equal air time for different voices
- Encourage participation from people in the middle
- Enable participants to support a respectful conversation

Dialogue as a conflict resolution tool

Strategy 3 – Following through:

- Communicate results
- Be transparent about responses

Key takeaways

- Surfacing values and interests
- Moving beyond polarized positions
- Finding common ground for compromise and collaboration

A few resources...

- [“Fostering Dialogue Across Divides”](https://publicconversations.org) Public Conversations Project – publicconversations.org
 - Pages 9 & 98 – Example communication agreements/ground rules
- [“A Guide for Training Public Dialogue Facilitators”](https://everyday-democracy.org) Everyday Democracy – everyday-democracy.org
 - Pages 50 & 55-57 – Managing conflict & responses to typical facilitation challenges
- [Power and Love](#) – Adam Kahane
- [Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World](#) – Michelle Lebaron
- [I’m Right and You’re an Idiot](#) – James Hoggan

A few resources...

- Ideas for impactful dialogue:
 - Be open to other perspectives: disagreement is normal—use this as an opportunity to clarify and understand new ideas.
 - Be inquisitive: Ask thoughtful questions and listen openly to the answers (e.g. What do you mean? Tell me more. What leads you to believe this?)
 - Speak personally: share stories of lived experiences and personal values rather than set opinions.
 - Be disciplined in your participation: brief, focused and on topic, leaving time for others.
- ‘Deep Democracy’ facilitation method ground rules for conflict:
 - We are doing this to stay in relationship
 - We are all here to learn from each others
 - No one has the monopoly on truth

Optional Q&A

- Do you have any questions about the presentation and examples?
- What are some challenges in dealing with conflict in your community? What are some successes you've had in resolving conflicts?

Thank you for participating!

SFU Centre for Dialogue - Civic Engage Program

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www.sfu.ca/civic-engage