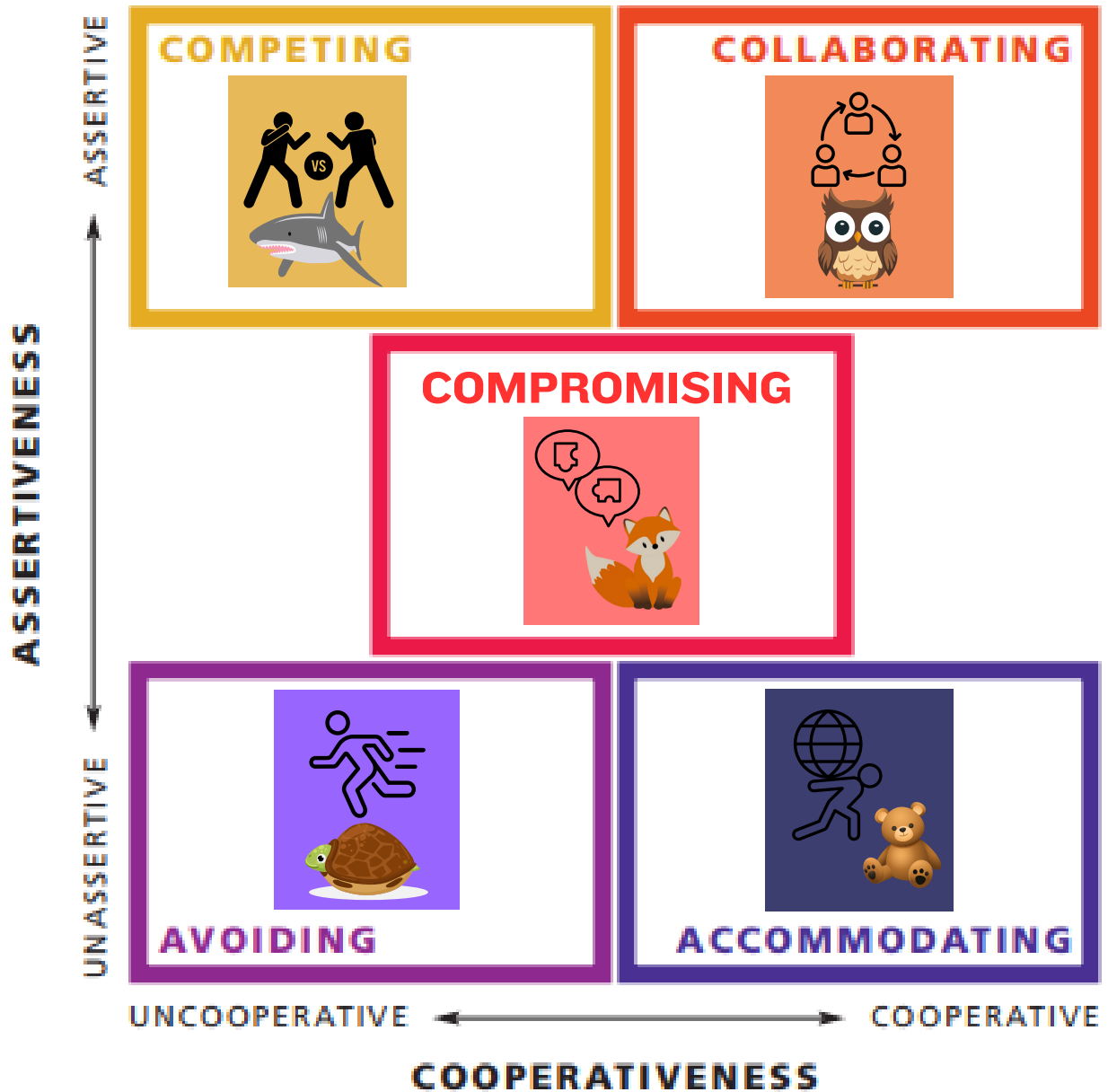




Triena McGuirk, B.S.W, M.S.W., R.S.W
Social Worker in Private Practice

Five Conflict Modes

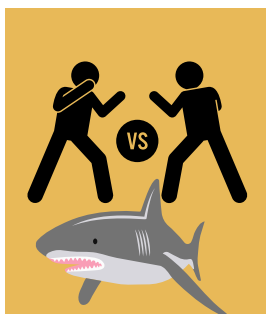


Adapted from: Conflict Management Styles Descriptions. Docstoc, <http://img.docstoccdn.com/thumb/orig/47081621.png>



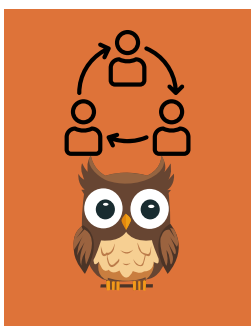


COMPETING



Competing is assertive and uncooperative, a power-oriented mode. When competing, an individual pursues their own concerns at the other person's expense or discomfort, using whatever power seems appropriate to win their position. Competing might mean standing up for your rights, defending a position you believe is correct, or simply trying to win. "Sharks" typically value their goals over relationships, and they are more concerned about accomplishing their goals than being liked by others. They may attempt to force others to accept their solution to the conflict by overpowering them mentally, physically, financially...any means necessary.

COLLABORATING



Collaborating is both assertive and cooperative. When collaborating, an individual attempts to work with the other person to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both. It involves digging into an issue to identify the underlying concerns of the two individuals and to find an alternative that meets both sets of concerns. Collaborating between two persons often requires exploring the disagreement to learn from each other's insights, and resolving some condition that would otherwise have them competing for resources. "Owls" highly value both their goals and their relationships. They view conflict as a problem to be solved and seek solutions that are mutually agreeable. Owls view conflicts as opportunities to improve the relationship by reducing tension.

COMPROMISING

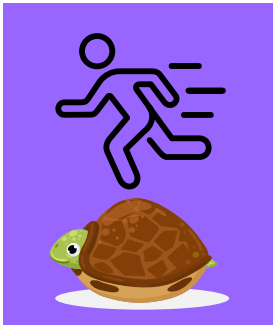


Compromising is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. When compromising, an individual has the objective of finding an expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties. Compromising falls on a middle ground between competing and accommodating, giving up more than competing and less than accommodating. Likewise, it addresses an issue more directly than avoiding and does not explore it in as much depth as collaborating. Compromising might mean splitting the difference, exchanging concessions, or seeking a quick middle-ground position. "Foxes" are moderately concerned with both their goals and their relationships with others. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals in order to find agreement.





Triena McGuirk, B.S.W., M.S.W., R.S.W
Social Worker in Private Practice



AVOIDING

Avoiding is unassertive and uncooperative. When avoiding, an individual does not immediately pursue their own concerns or those of the other person. They do not address the conflict. Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time, or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation or perceived

threatening situation. “Turtles” tend to value avoiding confrontation more than their goals or relationships. They can often completely give up on relationships or goals that are associated with conflict.



ACCOMMODATING

Accommodators aim for harmony and accept blame to keep peace. They often suppress their own needs, can become a doormat and have lower self worth. Accommodators have a dominant, high concern for other’s goals and needs without much concern for oneself. Over time, this can lead to resentment. “Teddy Bears” typically value relationships over

their own goals; and if forced to choose they will often sacrifice their goals in order to maintain relationships. Teddy Bears generally want to be liked by others, and prefer to avoid conflict because they believe addressing it will damage relationships. Teddy Bears try to smooth over conflict to prevent damage to the relationship.

The conceptualization of five conflict modes is a helpful tool to assist people to identify their primary bargaining style, which is a relatively stable, personality driven cluster of behaviours and reactions that arise in negotiating or conflictual encounters. The knowledge acquired from this self exploration allows people to gain perspective on their own actions, how they interrupt the actions of others and how they can utilize feedback more constructively. We all differ in how we navigate this terrain, and the way we show up may differ from situation to situation contingent on who the interaction is with and what is at stake for us. There is no single “right” style for negotiation effectiveness. This tool simply invites awareness to an individual's preferences or aversions for each of the five styles. It is important to remember that in differing contexts each conflict mode will each allow for certain systemic weakness and strengths.

2023

