



Report on TIDE Ranger's Conflict Management Training

Held at TIDE Conference Room, July 30, 2015

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July 31, 2015



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1. Workshop Objectives and Participants

The Conflict Management Workshop for TIDE rangers that was held at TIDE's Conference Room on July 30, 2015 focused on the following objectives:

- i. To describe the causes of conflict
- ii. To understand participants' reaction to conflict situations
- iii. To determine ways for turning negative conflict situations into positive problem solving interactions
- iv. To establish strategies for working through differences while building relationships and fostering teamwork
- v. To minimize conditions which contribute to causing conflict
- vi. To determine a communication process for working through conflict to create a win-win outcomes

The workshop was organized by an independent consultant who has the required professional qualifications and technical skills to provide the services to fulfill the objectives of the workshop. The functions as the consultant were to: (i) develop and implement the training curriculum utilizing best practices for resolving conflicts; (ii) encourage the maximum participation of TIDE Rangers; (iii) design and facilitate a series of activities, including group exercises, that would make the training interactive; and, (iv) prepare a report of the proceedings of the workshop.

Participants at the retreat were as follows:

Rangers Present:

Ah, Eugenio	Muschamp, Mario
Bonilla, Victor	Pop, Delbert
Cucul, Santiago	Sho, Agustin
Garbutt, Aaron	Valencio, Egbert
Halliday, Allan	Williams, Norman Andrew
Martinez, Narciso	

Facilitator: Jeremy A. Enriquez

2. Opening and Introductory Activities

At the beginning of the workshop, each participant was asked to introduce himself and to state their expectations of the workshop. The common theme from participants was that they wanted to learn specific techniques to resolve potential conflict that they are likely to encounter as rangers in the fields.

3. Defining Conflict

The participants were asked to define and give examples of conflict.

- Conflict was defined as a disagreement between two or more people who feel angry, who believe the others are in the wrong and who act in ways that cause a problem (Emotional)
- Disagreement between two or more people that spurs problem solving and innovation. (Cognitive)

In general, it is more desirable to decrease emotional conflict (usually over beliefs and feelings) and increase cognitive conflict (based on facts, and focus on the problem that can be verified and resolved).

4. Cost of Mismanaged Conflicts

What happens when conflicts are not properly managed?

The following were identified and discussed as the consequences of mismanaging a conflict or leaving a conflict unresolved:

1. **Bad decisions:** Mismanaged conflicts contaminate the decision-making process. How? It produces incomplete and unreliable information, impairs people's judgement, and results in paralyzing (often destructive) decisions.
2. **Wasted time:** When conflicts are not properly resolved, it could escalate thus wasting time to resolve a more complicated situation that could have been prevented.
3. **Lowered motivation:** Unresolved conflicts can increase stress and decrease individual and group motivation to complete the tasks at hand.
4. **Health costs:** Illness from stress due to increased tension from unresolved conflict
5. **Violence and personal injuries:** resulting from increased tension from unresolved conflict.

5. Types of Conflict

The following four main types of conflict were identified:

1. **Within yourself (intrapersonal) –**
 - Occurs when there is a desire followed by an Interference of that desire (due to beliefs, background, disposition, etc.) followed by guilt. An internal battle between what one wants and what one should (or ought to) do.
 - Can be disruptive and stressful if you do not understand your own needs and desires – Do not allow want to overpower should. You are your deepest desires.

- Important to understand your deep emotions and interests and stay in touch with yourself (values, beliefs, upbringing, etc.)
- Deeper understanding of yourself will give you a better basis for understanding others and for negotiating through interpersonal conflicts

Exercise: *The Practice of Mindfulness* as a tool to resolve inner and external conflicts: – Participants were introduced to the practice of mindfulness as a tool to increase self-awareness, self-control and objectivity, enhance flexibility, improve concentration and mental clarity, as well as the ability to relate to others and one's self with kindness, acceptance and compassion. The practice of mindfulness can enable one to be more able to manage conflicts to derive best possible outcomes.

Discussion points:

- Many people who practice mindfulness find that they are less likely to get caught up in worries about the future or regrets over the past, are less preoccupied with concerns about success and self-esteem, have better clarity in dealing with conflicts, and are better able to form deep connections with others.
 - Psychotherapists have turned to mindfulness meditation as an important element in the treatment of a number of problems including: depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, couples' conflicts, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder.
 - Scientists have discovered the benefits of mindfulness techniques help improve physical health in a number of ways such as: help relieve stress, treat heart disease, lower blood pressure, reduce chronic pain and improve sleep.
 - The practice of mindfulness is important tool for managing conflict within self and between and among others.
2. **Between one person and another (interpersonal)** – e.g. friend, relationship, family, co-worker,
 - Two persons want different things – can't come to an agreement nor get what they want without the other person.
 - Healthy conflict - provides skills to develop better relationships, gain an understanding of yourself, increase your resolution skills and avoid negative and damaging reactions.
 3. **Within groups (intragroup)** – two or more persons within a group or team disagreeing on issues relevant to meeting goals.
 - Opportunity for creativity and problem solving
 4. **Between groups (intergroup)** – one group or team against another
Elicit and discussed examples of each of the above.

6. Environmental conditions that breed conflict:

- Boundaries, rules, policies etc. are unclear
- Conflict of interest
- Communication barriers
- Dependence on one party
- Need for consensus – when all parties must agree
- Behavior regulations – stifling top down approaches that disregard individual initiatives
- Unresolved prior conflict

7. How do you respond to conflict?

1. **I Lose/You Lose: Aggressive or Mutual Harm:** You prefer everyone losing – including self – to the possibility of your adversaries winning.
2. **I Lose/You Win: Accommodating or Victim Response:** “Peace at any price”. Sacrificing your own interests so that others can have their way, even if you see the bigger picture
3. **I Win/You Lose: Competitive or Self-Assertive Response:** Focus on achieving only your own goals paying little attention to anyone else. Short term winning, long term damage to relationships.
4. **I Win/You Win: Collaborative Response:** Seeking common ground and looking for mutually beneficial outcomes. Very few people engage in this approach.

Exercises:

- i. **Role Playing:** Participants plan and act a skit to demonstrate various types of conflict likely to happen in the field, showing various forms of responses.
- ii. **Video presentation and discussion:** *Sandra Bland’s Traffic Stop and Arrest by Texas Police.* Analyse and discuss the actions of police and accused. What environmental conditions led to this conflict? How did each deal with the conflict? Why? What was the result? How could this conflict have been better managed? What practical lessons did you learn about yourself and for yourself as a ranger?

8. Steps for working through conflict

Step 1: Separate Your Emotions from the Issue: Emotions can cloud working with the issue.

Deal with the problem. Do not attack each other.

Step 2: Identify Underlying Issues: Focus on the issues. Question, listen and seek mutual understanding of the facts.

Step 3: Provide Options for Mutual Gain: Do not return anger for anger. If relationship is adversarial, vision will narrow. Encourage creative problem solving.

Step 4: Insist on Using Clear Criteria: Focus on the standards, rules, policies etc. rather than what the parties are willing or unwilling to do.

Exercise: Video presentation and discussion – *The Case of Rupert Myles vs Mayas of Santa Cruz*. Analyze and discuss the actions of each player. What were the facts? How did emotions play a role in the reactions to decisions? Why? How could this have been better handled? What lessons did you learn to apply to your work as a ranger?

9. Communication is key to managing conflict

- Reframe the issues to positive approaches and to shift focus from people to the problem
- Listen, really listen without interruption. This helps you discover an individual's perspective, values and understanding of the situation, issue or task.
- Do not assume (Ass-U-Me). Ask questions to derive facts and to clarify doubts and to avoid misunderstandings.
- Provide information or advice where needed
- Do not take the situations personally. The response of others is based on their perspectives, experiences, disposition etc. It's not about you. But you can make a difference by how you handle the situation – how well you communicate to clarify the situation.

10. Workshop Evaluation

At the conclusion of the workshop participants were asked to state the extent to which the workshop met their expectations. All participants unanimously shared that the workshop surpassed their expectations and provided fresh perspectives, deepened awareness, and practical tools for managing conflict. The consensus that the workshop should be taken by others, including all of TIDE staff since the information also applies to everyday life in relationships, within families, communities and organizations. The rangers also recommended further follow up workshops as these to build upon this foundation that was laid.

At the conclusion of the retreat the facilitator thanked the participants for their enthusiastic participation in all discussion topics and activities of the workshop.

Appendix 1: Workshop Agenda



CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOP FOR RANGERS

July 30, 2015

TIDE Conference Room, Punta Gorda

AGENDA

Objectives:

- vii. To describe the causes of conflict
- viii. To understand participants' reaction to conflict situations
- ix. To determine ways for turning negative conflict situations into positive problem solving interactions
- x. To establish strategies for working through differences while building relationships and fostering teamwork
- xi. To minimize conditions which contribute to causing conflict
- xii. To determine a communication process for working through conflict to create a win-win outcomes

Participants:

Protected Areas Rangers, TIDE

Thursday, July 30, 2015		
Time	Activity	Responsibility
8:15 a.m.	Arrival, Settle In,	Head Ranger
	OPENING SESSION	
8:30 a.m.	Round table introductions	Facilitator
8:40 a.m.	Overview and Objectives of the Workshop	

Thursday, July 30, 2015

Time	Activity	Responsibility
9:00 a.m.	Defining Conflict, Examples of conflict in field – Group Discussion	
9:20 a.m.	Cost of Mismanaged Conflicts. What happens when conflicts are not managed properly? Presentation and discussion	
9:40 a.m.	Identifying and managing Intrapersonal conflicts	
10:00 a.m.	Mindfulness as a tool for managing conflicts within self and in relationship with others.	
10:30 a.m.	BREAK	
10:45 a.m.	Interpersonal, Intragroup and Intergroup conflicts	
11:15 a.m.	Environmental conditions that breed conflicts	
11:40 a.m.	Video presentation: The Arrest of Sandra Bland by a Texas Police Analysis of the conflict and discussion on how the conflict could have been better managed.	
12:15 p.m.	LUNCH	Waluco's
1:15 p.m.	Role Playing: Positive and Negative ways to managing various types of conflicts in the field.	
2:00 p.m.	Discussion & Presentation: How do you respond to conflicts?	
2:45 p.m.	Steps for working through conflicts	
3:15 p.m.	BREAK	

Thursday, July 30, 2015

Time	Activity	Responsibility
3:20 p.m.	Video presentation , analysis and discussion – <i>The Case of Rupert Myles vs Mayas of Santa Cruz</i> : (Environmental conditions, nature of response, facts vs emotions, impacts, how could it have been managed better)	
3:40 p.m.	Communication as key to resolving conflicts	
4:10 p. m.	Roundtable workshop evaluation	
4:15 p.m.	WRAP UP & CONCLUSION	