

INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT STYLES

Our approach to anti-racism

- We work from the belief that with God's help we can repent of the sin of racism and build a more just and equitable Church.
- Prioritize the people who have been and are being harmed – Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color
- Recognize that people come to this work with different agendas, levels of skill and in different developmental places
- Focus on equipping white folk to develop both understanding and the concrete skills needed to participate safely and effectively in dismantling racism
- Start with Intercultural Communication skill development – helping everyone communicate across difference.



KNOWLEDGE

Info about the culture group with whom you are interacting



to increase:

Participate in cultural events and learn about validated cultural patterns

MOTIVATION

Overall intentions and emotional response to intercultural communications



to increase:

Identify own cultural patterns and reflect on positive aspects of past interactions

SKILLS

Ability to perform effective and appropriate behaviors



to increase:

Practice behaviors in new cultural frameworks and receive feedback

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: THE HOW

The **capability** to shift cultural perspective and adapt—or bridge—behavior to cultural commonality & difference

- Deep cultural self-awareness
- Deep understanding of the experiences of people from different cultural communities—in perceptions, values, beliefs, behavior and practices
- Behavioral shifting across these various cultural differences

CONFLICT

- ✓ Conflict is common
- ✓ Conflict involves disagreements and emotion
 - ✓ Conflict is culturally grounded
 - ✓ Conflict styles are patterned
 - ✓ Conflict styles are learned



WHY INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT STYLES?

In conflict →

we experience heightened anxiety.

When anxious →

we rely MORE on preferred approaches for communication and resolving conflict →
and LESS on our “adaptive” skills.

Which may escalate the conflict →

unless we understand and acknowledge the differences in conflict style.

WHY INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT STYLES?

This will help you:

- Improve your communication across cultural differences
- Resolve disagreements with people who approach conflict differently than you
- Manage the stress and anxiety present in difficult situations
- Interpret the statements and actions of the others more accurately
- Communicate your goals and interests to others more effectively



EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVENESS/RESTRAINT

RESTRAINED

EXPRESSIVE

Disguised emotion ➡ Overt display

Control by “internalizing” ➡ Control by “externalizing”

Minimal nonverbal display ➡ Visible nonverbal display

Constrained ➡ Expansive vocalization

Sensitive to hurting feelings ➡ Sensitive to emotional constraint

Emotional “maturity” ➡ Relational trust though emotional commitment

Emotional suppression for credibility ➡ Emotional info necessary for credibility



DIRECT/INDIRECT COMMUNICATION

DIRECT

INDIRECT

Meaning “inside” message \Rightarrow Meaning “outside” message

Precise/explicit language \Rightarrow Ambiguity and vagueness

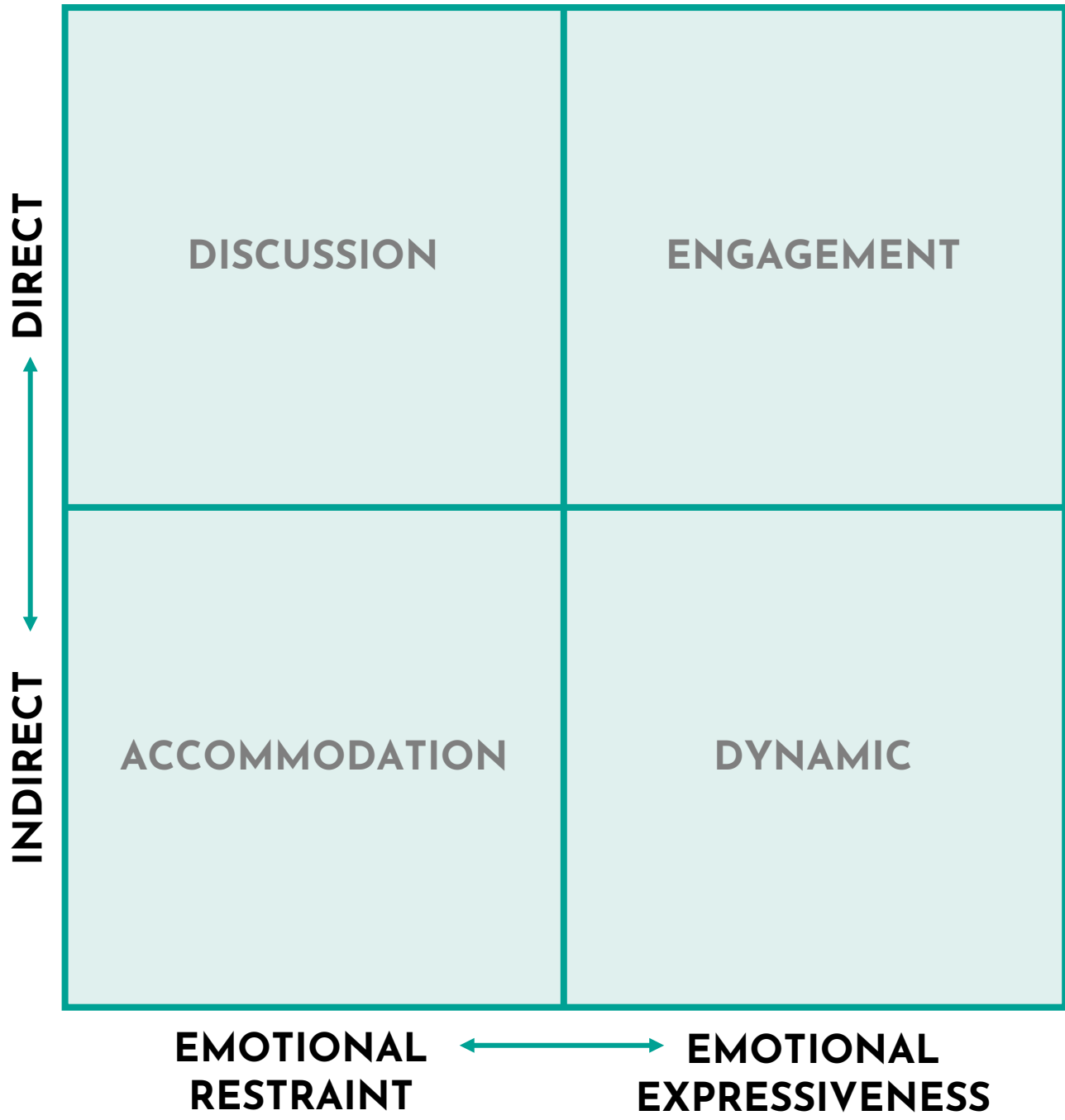
Face-to-face resolution \Rightarrow 3rd party

Speak your mind \Rightarrow Discretion voicing goals

Assert difference of opinion \Rightarrow “Talk around” disagreements

Reasoned argument \Rightarrow “facework”

Dis/agreement focus \Rightarrow Relationship focus



DISCUSSION

Direct - Emotional Restraint

Characteristics:

Precision in language, direct conversation, objective facts, cautious use of feelings

Self-Observed Strengths

- Confronts problems
- Elaborates position or argument
- Maintains a calm atmosphere

Others may see as:

- Having difficulty “reading between the lines”
- Too logical and unfeeling
- Uncomfortable with emotional arguments

ENGAGEMENT

Direct - Emotional Expressiveness

Characteristics:

Sincerity, more intense verbal and non-verbal emotion, better with arguments where emotion is on the table

Self-Observed Strengths

- Provides detailed explanations, info instructions
- Freely expresses opinions
- Shows feelings

Others may see as:

- Unconcerned with views and feelings of others
- Dominating and rude
- Uncomfortable with viewpoints that are disconnected from emotion

ACCOMMODATION

Indirect - Emotional Restraint

Characteristics:

Ambiguity so conflict doesn't get "out of control,"
emotional calm and reserve for interpersonal harmony,
3rd party intermediaries, stories

Self-Observed Strengths

- Considers alternative meanings to ambiguous messages
- Able to control emotional outbursts
- Sensitive to the feelings of the other party

Others may see as:

- Difficulty in voicing own opinion
- Uncommitted and dishonest
- Difficulty in providing elaborated explanations

DYNAMIC

Indirect - Emotional Expressiveness

Characteristics:

Hyperbole, more “associative” argument structure, ambiguity, stories, humor, credibility grounded in emotional expressiveness of other party

Self-Observed Strengths

- Uses 3rd parties to gather information and resolve difficulties
- Skilled at observing changes in non-verbal behavior
- Comfortable with strong emotional displays

Others may see as:

- Rarely “gets the point”
- Unreasonable and devious
- Too emotional

BREAKOUT ROOMS

- What rules about conflict were you taught growing up? Can you relate these to a conflict style?
- What other influences in your life helped refine your approach for dealing with disagreements and sharing emotion in conflict?
- What is your preferred conflict style now? What style do you use most often with friends or family? What style do you use most often in a workplace or church setting?

DIRECT OR INDIRECT?

**“It is good to know
the truth, but it is
better to speak of
palm trees.”**

Arab proverb

**“Hear one
and understand
ten.”**

Japanese proverb

**“Say what you
mean
and mean
what you say.”**

American proverb

**“Nothing done
with intelligence
is done without
speech.”**

Greek proverb

EMOTIONAL RESTRAINT OR EXPRESSIVENESS?

**“The first to raise
their voice loses
the argument.”**

Chinese proverb

**“Silence produces
peace, and peace
produces safety.”**

Swahili proverb

**“What is nearest
the heart is
nearest the mouth.”**

Irish proverb

**“After a storm, fair
weather, after
sorrow, joy.”**

Russian proverb

FIGURE 4

Selected Cultural Patterns across Communication and Conflict Styles

All cultural patterns exist in all cultures—but some are preferred more than others.

Discussion Style

- ▲ **North America**
e.g., United States (European American), Canada
- ▲ **Europe**
e.g., Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany
- ▲ **Asia Pacific**
e.g., Australia, New Zealand

Engagement Style

- ▲ **North America**
e.g., United States (African American)
- ▲ **Europe**
e.g., France, Greece, Italy, Spain
- ▲ **Central & Latin America**
e.g., Cuba, Puerto Rico
- ▲ **Asia**
e.g., Russia
- ▲ **Middle East**
e.g., Israel

Accommodation Style

- ▲ **North America**
e.g., Native American
- ▲ **Latin America**
e.g., Mexico, Costa Rica, Peru
- ▲ **Asia**
e.g., China, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia

Dynamic Style

- ▲ **Arab Middle East**
e.g., Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon
- ▲ **Asia**
e.g., Pakistan



