WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Choose How to Handle the Disagreement

A deliberate conflict response with a boundary and a way back to the conversation.

25 minutes | Five conflict modes · Assertiveness and cooperation

Use it in three moves

1. Name the disagreement and ask what matters to each person. Check urgency, authority, and the consequences of each possible response.

2. Compare the five modes without assigning either person a permanent style. Consider whose needs and costs each approach would make visible.

3. Prepare an honest opening and a next step. If you pause the conversation, say when and how you will return.

Name the disagreement and the stakes

Separate interests, facts, authority, urgency, and relationship needs. Use appropriate support for threats or serious misconduct.

Clarify your concern and theirs

What matters to each party? Ask rather than guessing.

Compare five modes

Competing: pursue your concern firmly. Collaborating: work for both concerns. Compromising: trade concessions. Avoiding: defer or step away. Accommodating: yield to the other concern. Each has costs.

Choose How to Handle the Disagreement

YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

Check when this choice fits

Consider time, power, safety, importance, and information. A pause needs a return date; yielding should not become a pattern of hidden cost.

Prepare an opening

Describe the shared constraint and invite their account without disguising your need.

Agree what happens next

Record the arrangement, support, unresolved issue, and review.

A question for me

Who pays the price if we call this compromise?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

Name the disagreement and the stakes

Two teams want the same review slot. Both have a real deadline; the shared capacity is limited.

Clarify your concern and theirs

Our team needs a verified customer report. The other team needs a time-sensitive release review.

Compare five modes

Collaborate first to see whether different reviewers or narrower scopes can meet both needs. If time runs out, use the agreed priority owner.

Check when this choice fits

We have 20 minutes to explore options. The service owner can decide if no workable arrangement emerges.

Prepare an opening

We both need the review slot. Can we look at what each review actually requires before deciding which moves?

Agree what happens next

Split the review by expertise this week, then ask the owner to address the recurring capacity limit.

The thinking behind it

The same choice has different costs when power is unequal. Make it possible to disagree without requiring the less powerful person to absorb the whole risk.

The Thomas-Kilmann conflict model describes five modes across assertiveness and cooperativeness. This original choice guide explains the modes without reproducing the TKI instrument, scoring personality, or assigning a fixed conflict type.

Kilmann Diagnostics · Five conflict modes

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne