

Conflict Engagement as a Leadership Competency

Dawn Osborne-Adams, JD
University Ombuds

Joshua Canzona, PhD
Associate University Ombuds

Agenda

- I. Developing common language and frameworks
- II. Moving from concepts to action
- III. Resources

Goals

1. **Analyze** definitions of leadership, conflict, and trust individually and in relationship with each other
2. **Identify** and **explain** four potential outcomes of conflict and potential responses on the conflict resolution continuum
3. **Assess** when to adopt one or more of eight potential roles for managers leading through conflict
4. **Describe** and **differentiate** resources available to help the campus community manage conflict
5. **Explain** how the ombuds office can act as a resource for all community members in challenging situations



Reflection Question

Think of a person you admire for their ability to handle conflict. This can be a famous person, someone you know in daily life, or a fictional character.

Based on this person, and how they handle conflict, what are the traits you find admirable?

Developing Common Language and Frameworks

Leadership

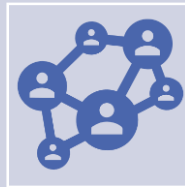
Smiley, F. "Leadership Guide to Conflict and Conflict Management," in *Leadership in Healthcare and Public Health* by Thomas Huber et. al. (Eds.) (The Ohio State University, 2018).



The ability to emphasize the pursuit of **goals** and **motivate** others to pursue them as well.



A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a **common goal**.



The ability to inspire **trust, build relationships, and encourage others**.

Conflict

“A perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously.”

-- *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement*, Dean G. Pruitt and Jeffrey Z. Rubin,
(New York: Random House, 1986).

Trust



SINCERITY



RELIABILITY



COMPETENCE



CARE

Model by Charles Feltman



Reflection Question

How might we consider the concepts of **leadership**, **conflict**, and **trust** in relationship to each other?

Moving from Concepts to Action

Before You Take Action

1. Define Your Goal(s)

- What are you hoping to achieve?
- Where do you hope to end up?
- What would progress look like?

2. Define Your Role(s)

- How would you describe your role in the situation?
- What is needed from you in this situation?

Possible Outcomes in Conflict

- One party succeeds in **overwhelming** the other, and the other yields

Overwhelm



- The two parties **avoid** further conflict

Avoid



- A powerful third party (or parties) **imposes a settlement**

Impose

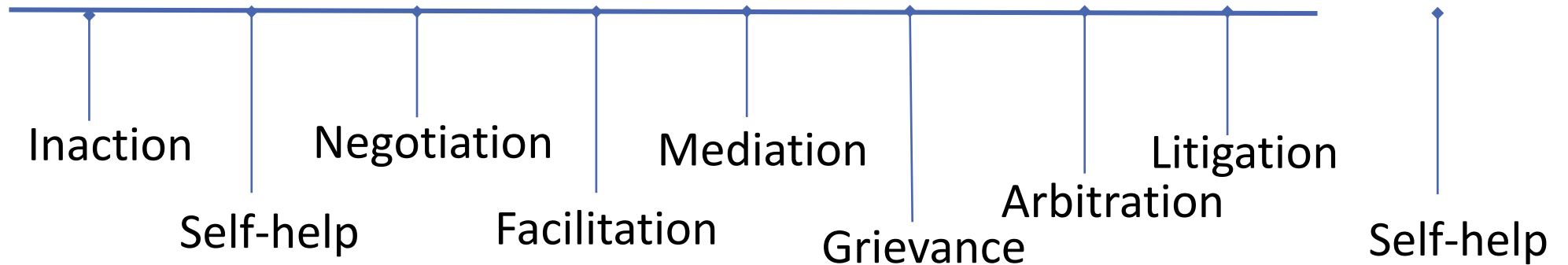
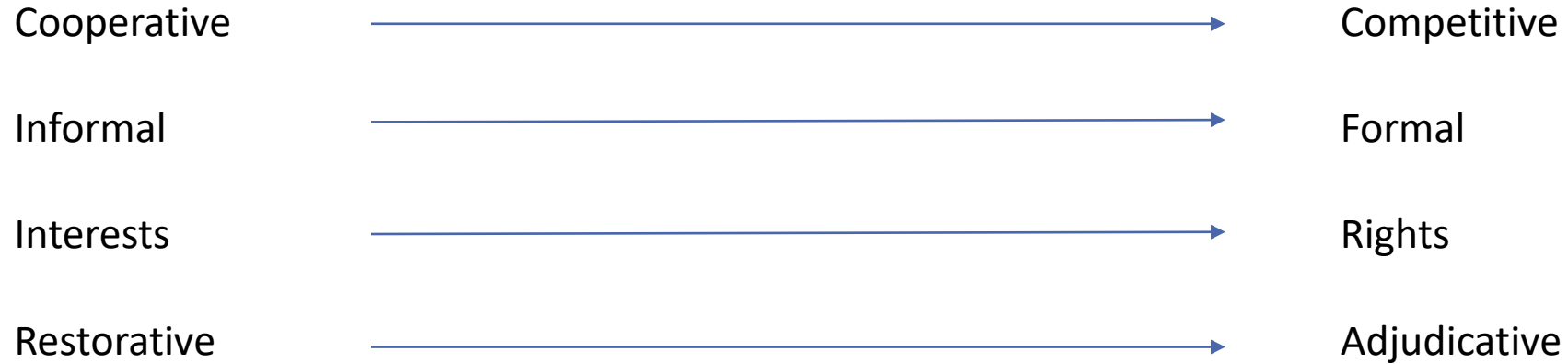


- The two parties **negotiate a settlement**

Negotiate



Resolution Process Continuum



Addressing Conflicts and Assessing Your Responsibility

Should (or when should) I get involved?

If I get involved, what role(s) will I play?

What if there are conflicting narratives?

What do I need to do—or not do—in order to be fair?

What are those in conflict expecting of me?

What does my supervisor/the University expect of me?

When should I seek assistance?

Conflict Roles for Leaders and When to Choose Them



Complaint Receiver: You are approached about a workplace conflict a person has observed or experienced.



Information Seeker: You need to gather information before deciding how to best respond to a concern.



Rule Enforcer: You or others find violations of expectations, policies, laws, and you have a responsibility to set limits and respond.

Conflict Roles for Leaders and When to Choose Them



Arbitrator: You use your decision-making authority to resolve a conflict. This is especially useful in time-limited situations where a policy is not violated.



“Mediator”: When you are (1) fine with any resolution reached by the parties in conflict (2) the parties agree you are acceptable as a mediator and (3) no allegations of inappropriate behavior requiring other interventions are made.



Facilitator: When a group needs assistance making their own decisions, and you can help guide a discussion toward common goals and agreements.

Conflict Roles for Leaders and When to Choose Them



Coach: You want to help a colleague find their own agency in managing a conflict.



Referral Agent: When you need to engage offices with additional time, expertise, or investigative and adjudicative authority to address a conflict.

Resources

Campus resources for conflict management

Department/Unit

- Direct supervisor, other administrators, colleagues

Human Resources Faculty Affairs

- Policies, resources, formal processes, and support

HR Employee Relations

- Strengthens communication between managers/employees

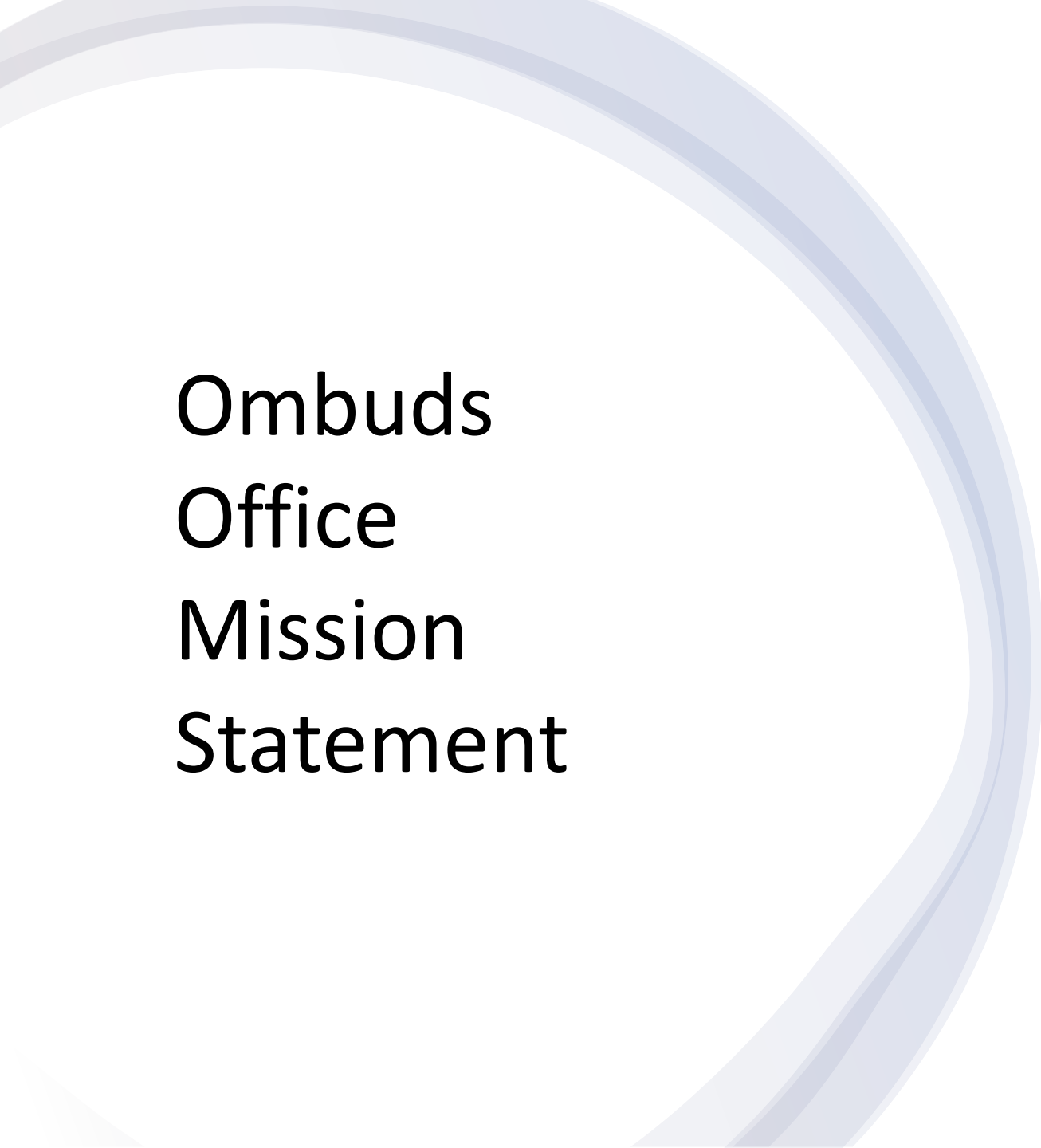
Equal Opportunity Compliance (EOC)

- Addressing discrimination and harassment

Ombuds

- Protected space to discuss any Carolina-related concern

You may choose to address conflict or make change in a more systemic way through resources like the Employee Forum, Faculty Council, and school-based governance structures.



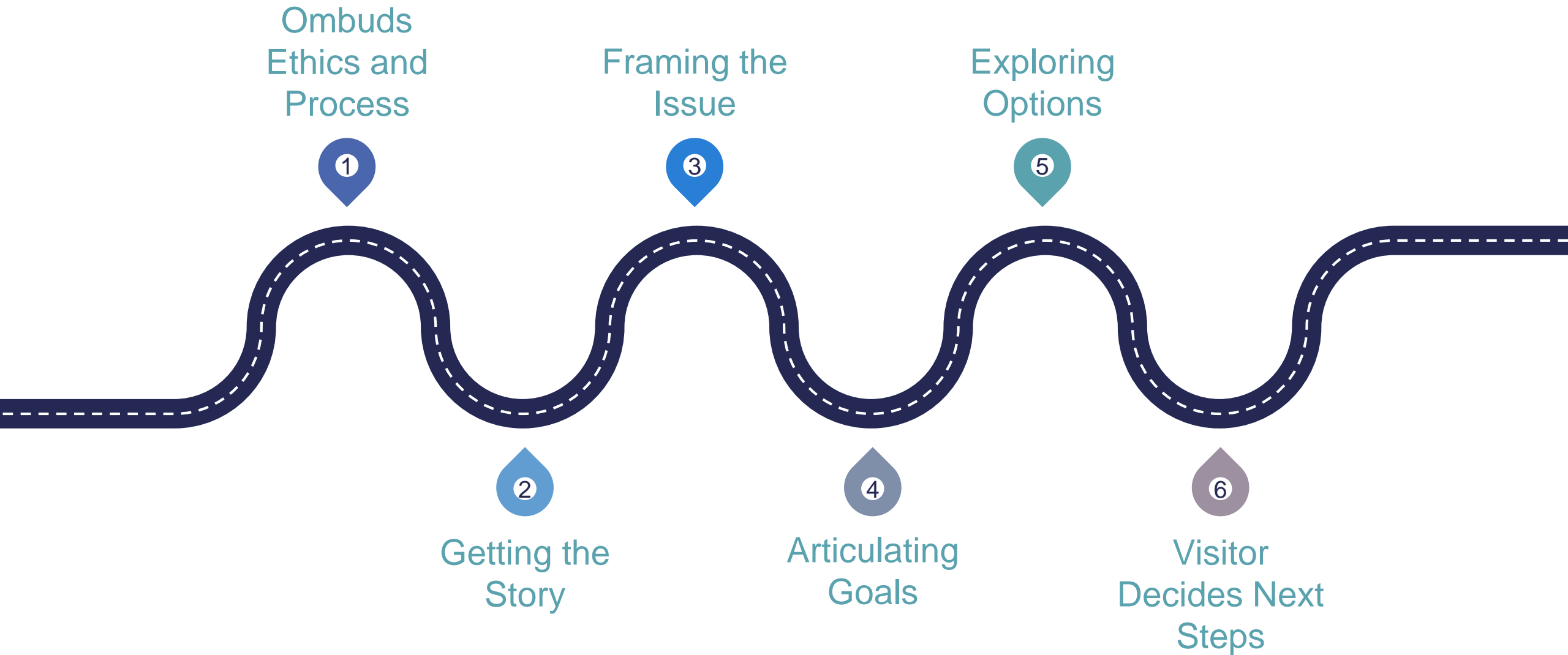
Ombuds Office Mission Statement

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Ombuds Office is available to assist all members of the university community in navigating any Carolina-related question, challenge, or concern.

We are committed to [ethical ombuds practice](#) and to fostering an environment in which individuals can feel seen and heard, discuss anything that is important to them, and strategize their next steps.

Through consultation, education, and facilitation, we support thoughtful decision-making, fair processes, constructive approaches to conflict, and a campus climate that is both healthy and humane.

What to Expect



Practical Information

Who: Dawn Osborne-Adams, University Ombuds and Director
Joshua Canzona, Associate University Ombuds
Victoria Dowd, Assistant University Ombuds and Program Specialist

When: We strive for flexibility and accessibility

Where: By phone, videoconference or in-person at
137 E. Franklin Street, Suite 222

How: Phone at (919) 843-8204
e-mail for scheduling only ombuds@unc.edu

Services are free and voluntary

Thank you for coming! We want to hear from you!



<https://go.unc.edu/conflictengagement>

Questions and Conversation

