

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

The Five Conflict Modes of the TKI Conflict Instrument

Which is your default mode for dealing with conflict?

Competing:

Competing is both assertive and uncooperative (it's Win/Lose) — from this stance, an individual pursues his own concerns and needs at the other person's expense. *"My needs are more important than yours."* Here a person uses whatever power seems appropriate to win their position — e.g. authority/positional power, resources, systems, etc. Competing means "standing up for your rights," defending a position that you believe is correct, or simply seeking to win.

Accommodating

Accommodating is both unassertive and cooperative (it's Lose/Win)— it is the opposite of competing. When we are in this mode, we forgo our own needs and concerns to meet – or accommodate – those of the other person. Here a person is saying *"your needs are more important than mine."* Accommodating might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, appeasing others, following orders.

Avoiding

Avoiding is both unassertive and uncooperative (it's Lose/Lose) — here a person is saying *"neither of our needs or concerns is important"* hence conflict is *avoided*. This might look like sidestepping or skirting an issue, distracting, finding excuses for delay, or withdrawing from a threatening situation altogether.

Collaborating

Collaborating is both assertive and cooperative (it's Win/Win) — it is the complete opposite of avoiding. Here an individual is saying *"both of our needs and concerns are important. Let's see how we get them fully met."* Neither party's needs are discounted. This means focusing on conversations that identify and explore underlying needs, and co-creating solutions that meet them. This conflict mode requires openness, curiosity, empathy, and creativity.

Compromising

Compromising is moderate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness (give and take). Here the focus is to find a quick solution that appeases both parties, at least for the short term. When we compromise, we have to give up something in order to gain something. It often involves making concessions, negotiation, or meeting someone 'halfway'.

Passive Assertive



Uncooperative Cooperative