



ROCKET

Conflict Styles

An Erasmus+ Higher Education Cooperation Partnership
Göttingen University, Uppsala University, Groningen University

Getting to Know Each Other

When you enter, please type the following in the chat:

- My name is _____.
- My pronouns are _____.*
- My university is _____.
- Fill in the blank on the Card for Connection:
 - “What makes me feel most alive is _____”

*Consider including your pronouns with your name:
Participants → ... → Rename



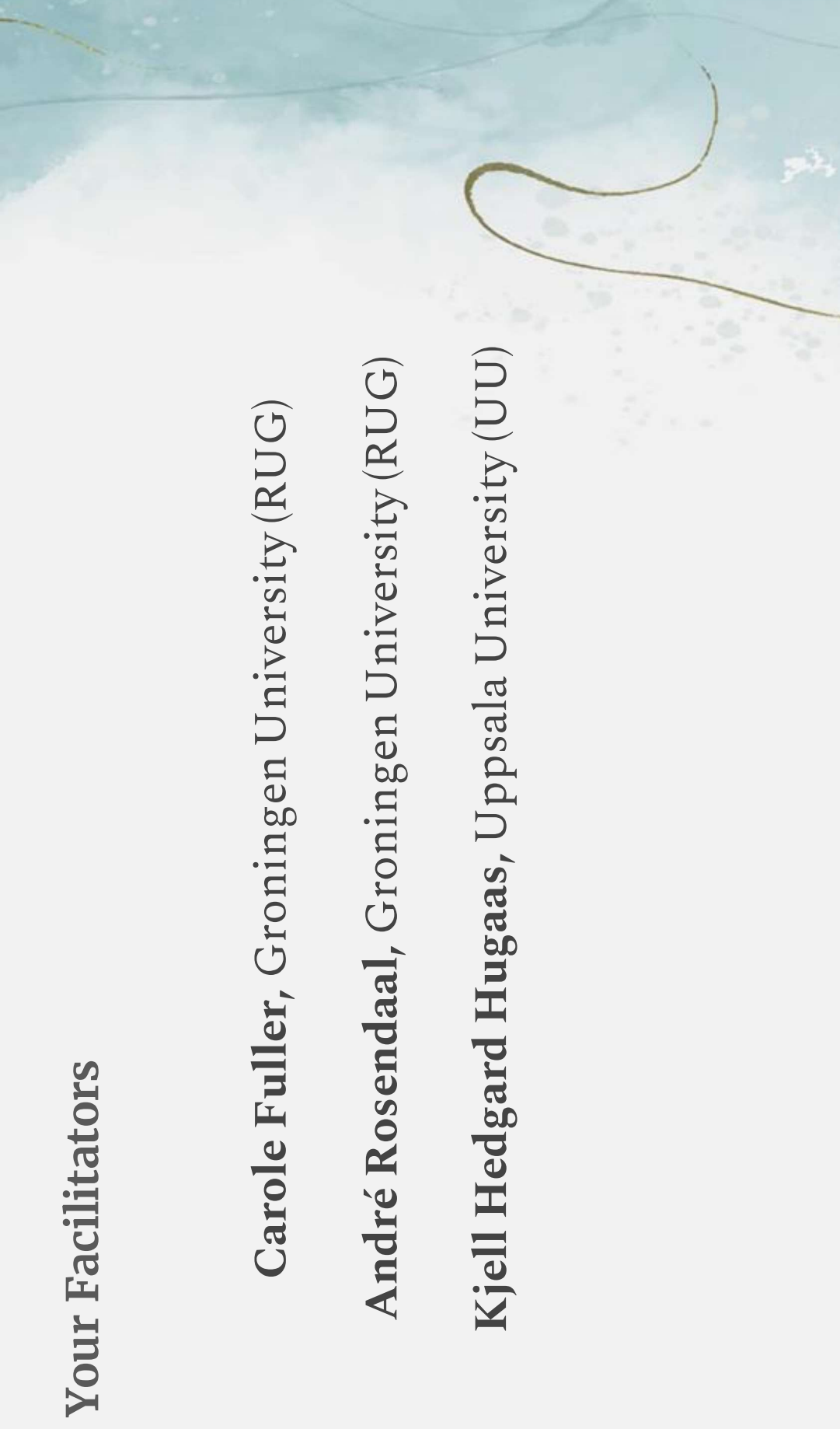
Image courtesy of Erin Hickok.
Cards for Connection available
at [Gamesforhumanity.com](https://www.gamesforhumanity.com)

Your Facilitators

Carole Fuller, Groningen University (RUG)

André Rosendaal, Groningen University (RUG)

Kjell Hedgard Hugaas, Uppsala University (UU)



Community Group Norms

- **Facilitators: start and end on time; and answer your questions in a variety of mediums.**

All of us:

- Participate as fully as possible.
- Consider what's shared by others confidential.
- Share "air time" with others when speaking. (We may take questions first from folks who haven't yet had the chance to speak).
- Remain muted during the session until you're about to speak.
- Keep video on throughout the session if possible.
- Please use the raise hand in Zoom feature to speak. Let's try it now!
- If you need to step away for more than a few minutes, inform facilitators in chat – impacts breakout groups.
- Minimize use of chat.
- Jot down quick notes to keep track of new concepts and ask questions.
- Please put your pronouns and UU, UGOE, or RUG next to your name.

Journaling Exercise (5 min)

Personal reflection to be shared in pairs later:

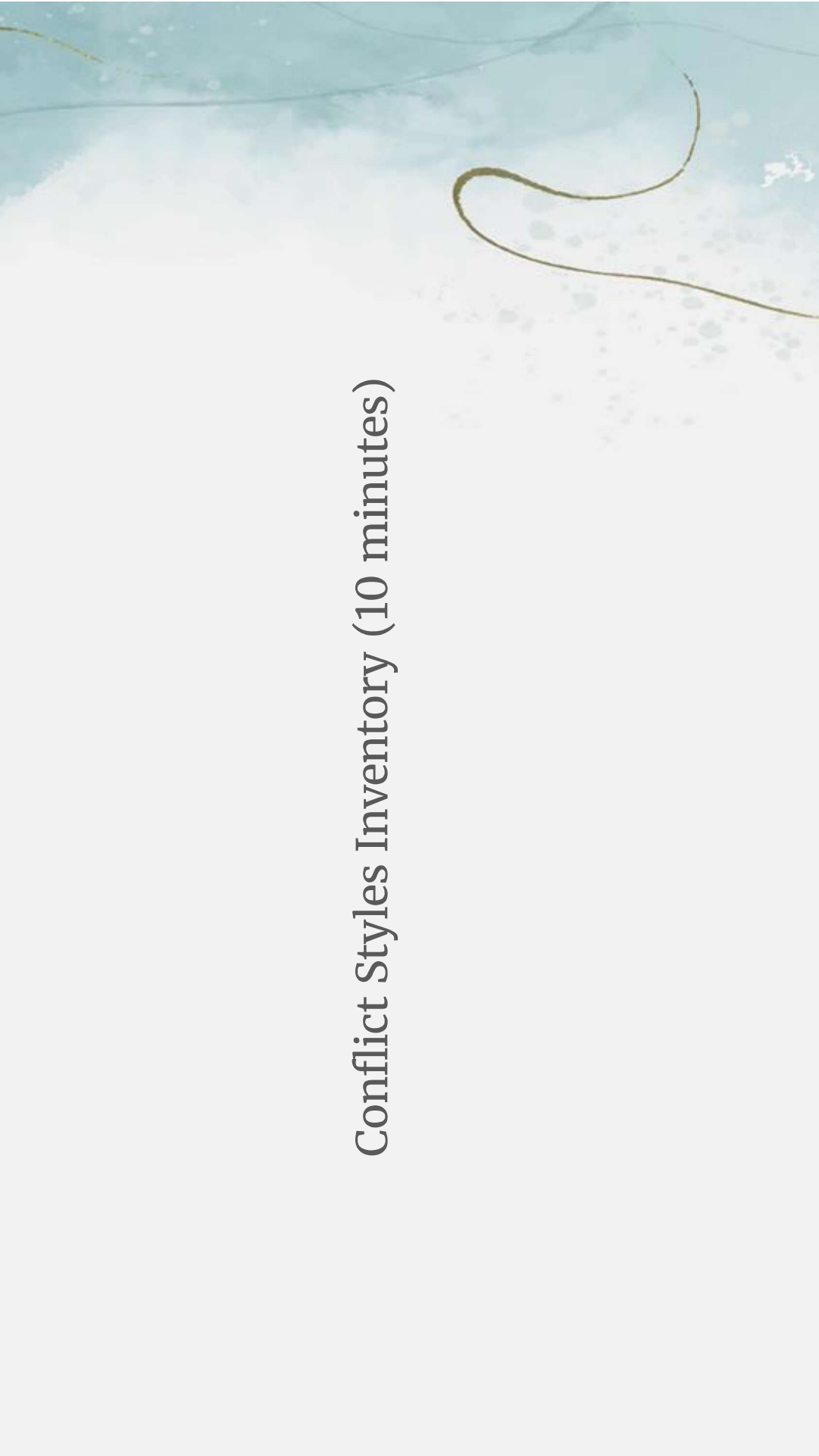
Consider a *personal* conflict that occurred at in your educational journey, either in the past or present, that stands out for you.

OR

Consider a conflict that occurred at work you have *witnessed* or can *imagine* taking place hypothetically.

- Briefly (5 minutes) journal using pen/paper or digital form.
- Later you will share your thoughts with your group.

Conflict Styles Inventory (10 minutes)



As we begin, it is helpful to know...

When we learn to *DO* something new, we go through about 7 stages.

1. Awareness
2. Knowledge and Information
3. Awkward Engagement
4. Phoniness and Artificiality
5. Mechanical Use
6. Routine and Customary
7. Creative and Innovative



Conflict Styles

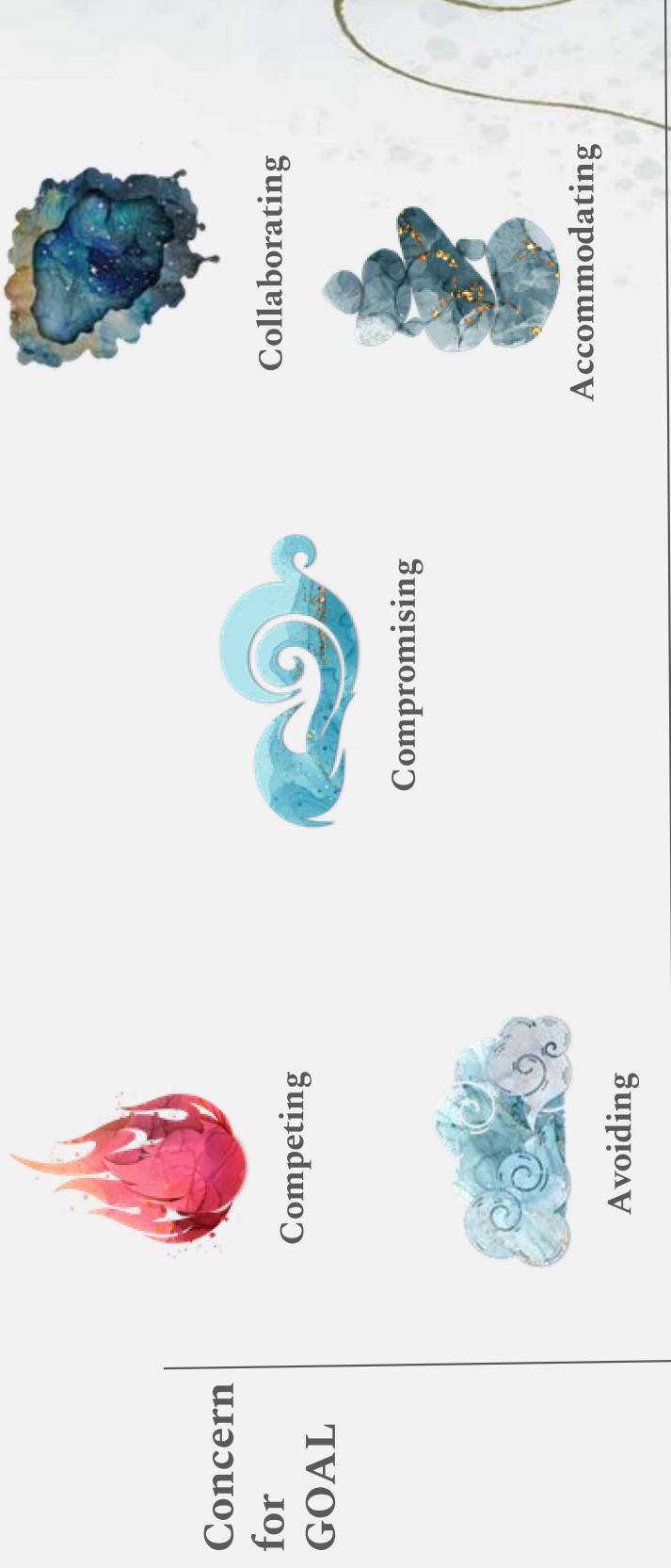
- Conflict styles (Thomas and Kilmann 1974) represent strong tendencies we each have when dealing with conflict.
- These conflict styles show varying degrees of:
 - a) **concern for the relationship**, or
 - b) **concern for the goal** (Kraybill 2011)
- While many people have one to two **most used** conflict styles, we may employ all styles at different times depending on the situation.

Conflict Styles

- People may also use different styles when relaxed in times of Calm than they do when stressed in times of Storm (Kraybill 2024a).
- However, we often do not realize we have options when engaging with conflict and feel trapped in one default mode of reaction.
- Learning about conflict styles can help us realize that we have many options in dealing with conflict.
- Let us take the Conflict Styles Assessment Now!

What choices do we have when responding to conflict?

Figure 1: Our model uses the elements to visualize these different styles.



Courtesy of Evocative Games AB

Concern for RELATIONSHIP

Conflict Styles

- Note that we are only using **one aspect** of these elements as a metaphor to help you remember a certain strategy for responding to conflict.
- The elements -- like us -- can change how they present themselves in the world.
- Also, these conflict styles may be invoked on behalf of someone else, for example, being competitive in order to advocate for someone's needs who we care about.
- If you have difficulty with metaphors, simply focus on the conflict styles.

What choices do we have when responding to conflict?

Our model uses the elements to visualize these different styles.



**Concern
for
GOAL**

Competing

Competing occurs when someone values achieving their goal above all other concerns, or “winning,” accepting that the other person in the conflict might “lose.”

In this metaphor, **fire** burns up the surrounding environment to remain strong and lit.

Concern for RELATIONSHIP

Figure 1: What choices do we have when responding to conflict?

Our model uses the **elements** to visualize these different styles.

Avoiding occurs when someone deflects attention away from a conflict or withdraws from the situation completely physically or psychologically, for example “ghosting.”

In this metaphor, **air** becomes less visible, holding stormy feelings inside rather than expressing them.



Avoiding

**Concern
for
GOAL**

Concern for RELATIONSHIP

Figure 1: What choices do we have when responding to conflict?

Our model uses **the elements** to visualize these different styles.

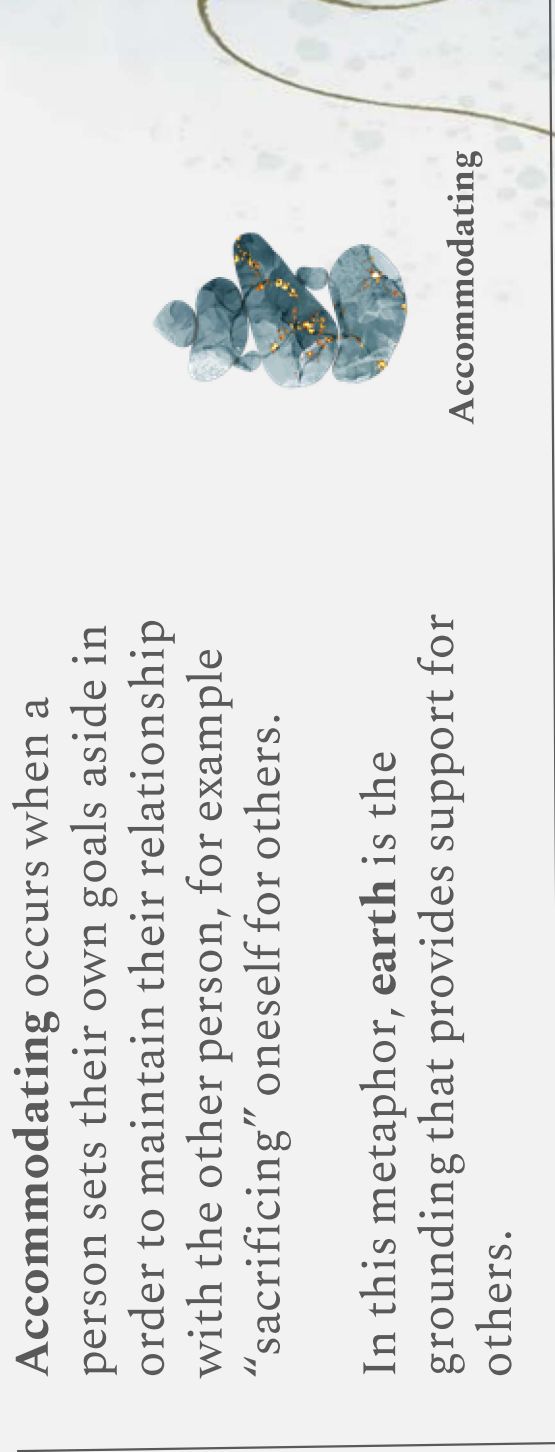


Figure 1: What choices do we have when responding to conflict?

Our model uses the **elements** to visualize these different styles.

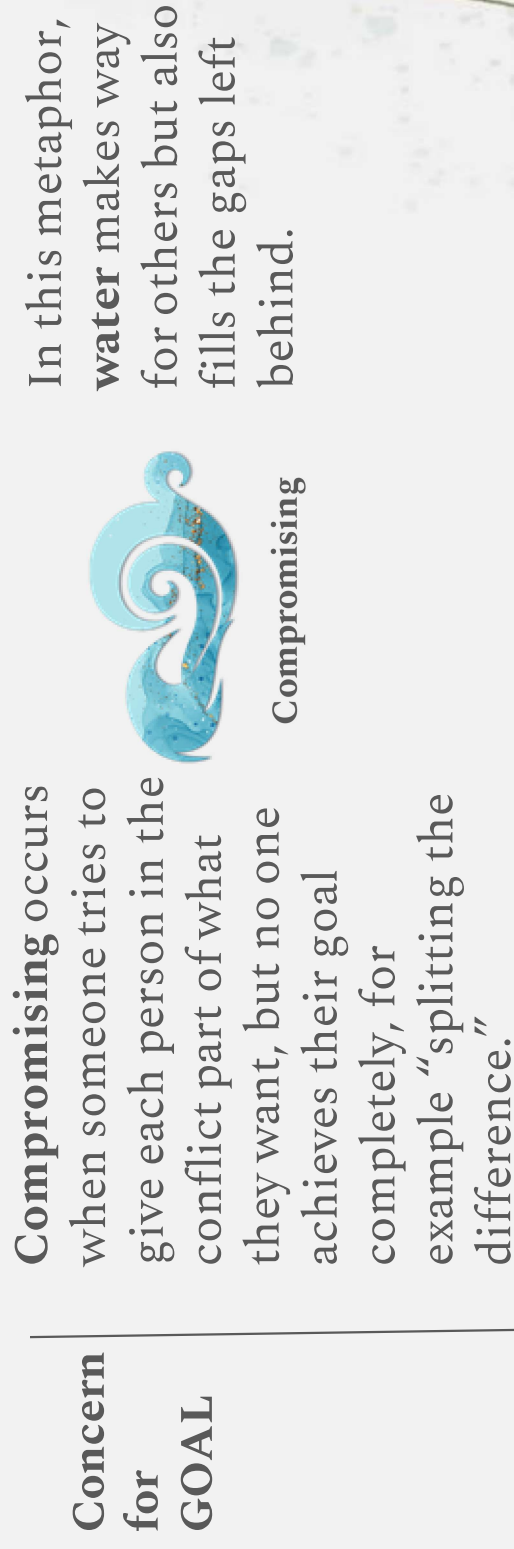


Figure 1: What choices do we have when responding to conflict?

Our model uses **the elements** to visualize these different styles.



Collaborating

Collaborating occurs when a person works to problem solve in a conflict, brainstorming solutions that help everyone achieve their goals, for example “win-win.”

In this metaphor, **space** provides an blank canvas to imagine possibilities and create new solutions.

**Concern
for
GOAL**

Concern for RELATIONSHIP

Each Conflict Style Has Downsides

Competing: Can risk damaging relationships

Avoiding: Can leave conflicts unresolved, causing them to get worse

Accommodating: Can lead to needs going unmet

Compromising: Can leave everyone feeling that they lost something

Collaborating: Can take a long time, not always efficient or practical

Paired Discussion

In your pairs, please discuss your conflict from earlier (10 minutes).

Each person will have 3-4 minutes to share.

- Which conflict style did the first person in the conflict use?
- Which conflict style did the second person in the conflict use?
- Would trying another style have been helpful? Why or why not?

10 Minute Break



Reminders about Role-play

- **Safety tools:** Role-playing can be surprisingly intense! Here are some tools you can use as needed:
 - **Softer:** You can ask participants to Soften their play by saying “Softer.”
 - **Pause Check-in:** You can pause for to check in with others.
 - **X-Card:** You can say or type “X” at any time to ask certain content to be removed or avoided. No questions asked. Example: “X for content around death”
 - **Cut:** You can call “Cut” at any time to end the scene.

Reminders about Role-play

- **Safety tools:**
 - **Opt-out:** You can opt-out of a scene by saying or typing “Opt-out” at any time
 - **Door is always open:** You can leave at any time, but please let your facilitator know if you are not returning.
 - **Emotional Support:** If you need emotional support, Cora is available in the main room.
 - Private message them
 - Ask for a breakout room or chat

Courtesy of Austin Community College

Reminders about Role-play

- **From facilitators:** You may hear the following words:
 - **Cut:** Cuts the scene, often before the conflict is “resolved”
 - **Pause:** Pauses the scene
 - **Monologue:** The player is asked to reveal briefly what their character is thinking
 - **Last Line:** The player is asked to end the scene by saying the last line that comes to their mind.

The Competer

- **Kjell will read the Competer:** You believe that most challenges in life have clear winners and losers -- and you are determined to never be on the losing side.
- You value standing up for what you believe is right.
- You fear that others will ignore your needs or take advantage of you.

Courtesy of Austin Community College

The Avoider

- **Alexandra will read the Avoider:** You avoid conflict at all costs because you believe that conflict will inevitably lead to yourself or other people getting hurt.
- You value your independence and privacy.
- You fear that conflict will harm you or others if discussed out in the open.

Courtesy of Austin Community College



The Accommodator

- **Sarah will read the Accommodator:** You often seek to de-escalate by addressing conflicts as problems to be fixed by calming everyone down and adjusting the environment to make them (and you) more comfortable.
- You **value** your relationships with others, as well as group tranquility and harmony.
- You **fear** that conflicts will escalate and will lead to more suffering for the people you love.

Courtesy of Austin Community College

The Compromiser

- **Kjell will read the Compromiser:** You often consider ways for everyone to get some of their needs met in any given situation.
- You value fairness and listening to all sides in a conflict.
- You fear that if conflicts are not addressed swiftly and reasonably, they will escalate beyond the point where they can be resolved and last longer than need be.

Courtesy of Austin Community College

The Collaborator

- **Sarah will read the Collaborator:** You are not afraid to take the time it needs to gather information about everyone's perspectives and to brainstorm solutions that work for all parties.
- You **value** teamwork and taking the time to find solutions that are both effective and fulfilling for everyone involved.
- You **fear** that one or more people in a conflict will stop being willing to collaborate on shared solutions.

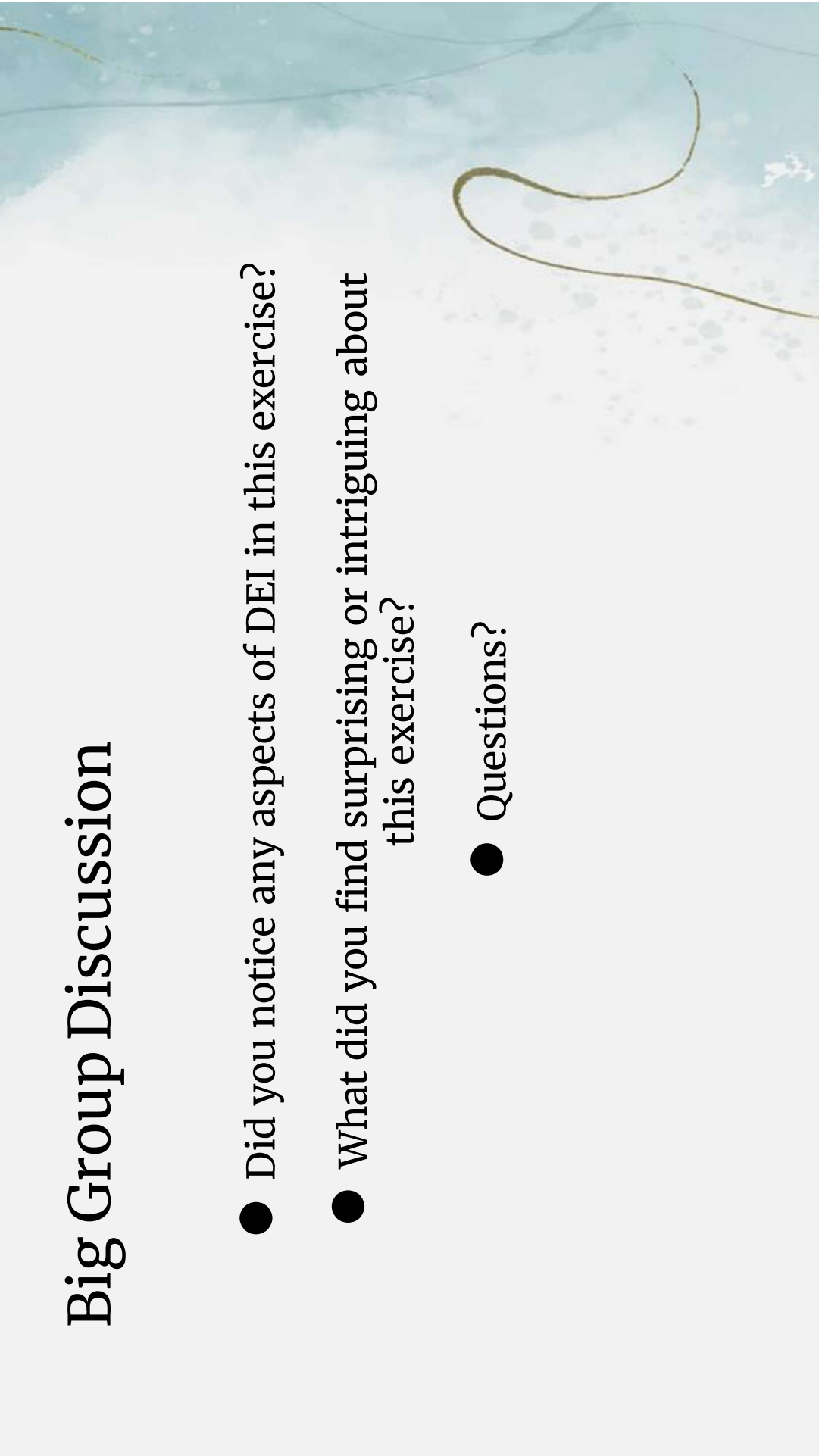
Courtesy of Austin Community College

Role-playing Exercises



Big Group Discussion

- Did you notice any aspects of DEI in this exercise?
- What did you find surprising or intriguing about this exercise?
- Questions?



References

- Gullick, Charlotte, Shirin Khosropour, Grant Potts, Laila Taraghi, and Sarah Lynne Bowman. 2020-. "Conflict Transformation Academy Workshop Series Level 1." Austin Community College, Austin, TX.
- Kraybill, Ron. 2024a. "Five Styles of Responding to Conflict." *Style Matters*. RiverHouse ePress.
- Kraybill, Ron. 2024b. "How to Manage Your Storm Shift in Conflict Resolution." *Style Matters*. RiverHouse ePress.
- Thomas, Kenneth Wayne, and Ralph H. Kilmann. 1974. *The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*. Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc.



Thanks!

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