

Conflict Resolution in the Workplace-

People First Economy

By: Tatiana Richardson, LMSW

Get to know the Speaker

- Tatiana Richardson
- Fully Licensed Master's Level Clinical Social Worker
- Psychotherapist for 7 years
- Currently work with a private group therapy practice, however will be founding my own independent private practice (*Pursuit of Healing Therapy Services*) at the end of November, 2023.
- Treatment Focus: Mood disorders, Trauma, Self Esteem, and Adjustment Issues, servicing the adult population.
- I am also a writer, and have published a Memoir titled Faith Mission: A Memoir Worth Discovering.

Outline

- Healthy vs. Unhealthy Conflict
- Self Management strategies to apply when navigating conflict resolution.
- The utilization of a collaborative conflict management approach.
- The breakdown of a workable Problem-Solving Process.
- Conclusion/points to remember.

Conflict

- Conflict typically occurs when parties are not in agreement with each other, and there is difficulty finding a solution or a common ground.
- How many of us have experienced some type of conflict in our lives?
- Conflict can happen very naturally, and at times cannot be avoided.
- Most often conflict is a healthy human experience that can feel uncomfortable to navigate, but is often relieved through facing the matter.
- Conflict can become unhealthy when it occurs constantly within a relationship, which usually happens when it is ignored or handled incorrectly. It can also be unhealthy when one uses aggression to address conflict, or unnecessarily abandons the conflict.

Self Management Tools to help you more accurately resolve conflict.

- Properly manage stress in your personal life, which will help you to have the mental space and energy to effectively handle workplace conflict.
- Trust that you can handle difficult situations, even if the conflict doesn't result in a desirable outcome.
- Manage your own bias, stereotypes, judgements, personal beliefs, and rigidity, as they can mislead you when striving to make proper decisions on behalf of others or make it more difficult to arrive at a reasonable compromise with them.

Avoid projection

- Avoid projecting past workplace traumas on to new workplace experiences/relationships.
- Projection could look like:
 - a) Assuming people will not like you because that was your experience in a past work environment, therefore not being open to developing new relationships.
 - b) Maintaining past poor work habits.
 - c) Not granting yourself the opportunity to reinvent yourself. We all deserve a fresh start!

Have a flexible mindset!

- One of the best life skills that I've learned is to be mentally flexible and open to different approaches that arrive at the same goal, and to keep in mind that sometimes it is best to focus on finding a reasonable solution, more so than being right.
- Any questions or ideas to add?

Let's explore the problem-solving process.

- Utilizing a collaborative approach when managing conflict with team members may work best.
- Clearly identify the problem/conflict by allowing each party to express their ideas of what they perceive is the problem.
 - i. Be willing to initiate a conversation to seek clarity.
 - ii. Be emotionally regulated before having difficult conversations.
 - iii. During conversations, notice your body language and what it may be communicating to the person on your behalf.

Examine the problem

- Understand what is causing the problem, and the needs and desires of each party.
 - i. Lean into assertiveness, and direct regard for the person's feelings, i.e., empathize.
 - ii. Don't be afraid to push through internal and external resistance.
 - iii. Avoid unspoken expectations or Cognitive Distortions.

List all the potential solutions

Don't be afraid to be creative, as some of our best solutions come from creative intention.

Evaluate the solutions

- Evaluate your solutions to determine the most desirable solution by weighing out the pros and cons of each solution, and listing each solution from desirable to least desirable.
- Mutually agree on the best solution, and consider how the solution would affect each party.
- Note to self: honor each party's freedom of choice, while keeping in mind the collaborative goal to reach a mutually agreeable and desirable outcome.

Determination Step

- Determine how and when the solution/compromise will be implemented.
 - i. Ensure all parties are clear about this.
 - ii. Then implement the solution.
 - iii. Set an agreeable amount of time that you will embrace the new implementation before evaluating its effectiveness.

Evaluate

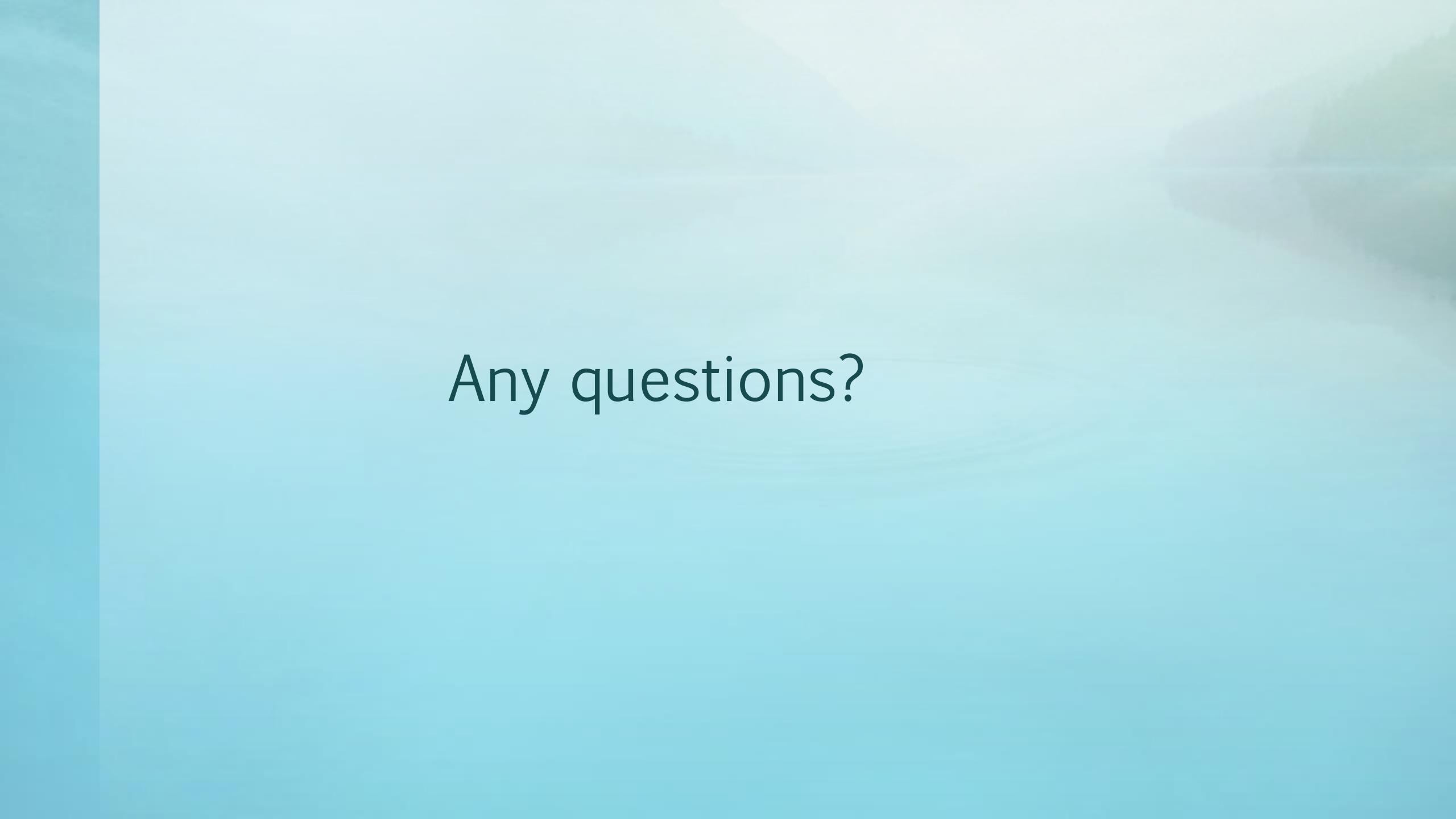
- Evaluate the outcome, and if the outcome is satisfactory to both parties, great! The problem is solved.
- If the solution is not satisfactory to both or either party, you could choose to return to the phase of exploring solutions and weighing out agreeable solutions, and determining which may be best to implement.
- Then offer a reasonable amount of time to adjust to the new implementation and reevaluate the outcome following that time period.

Consideration

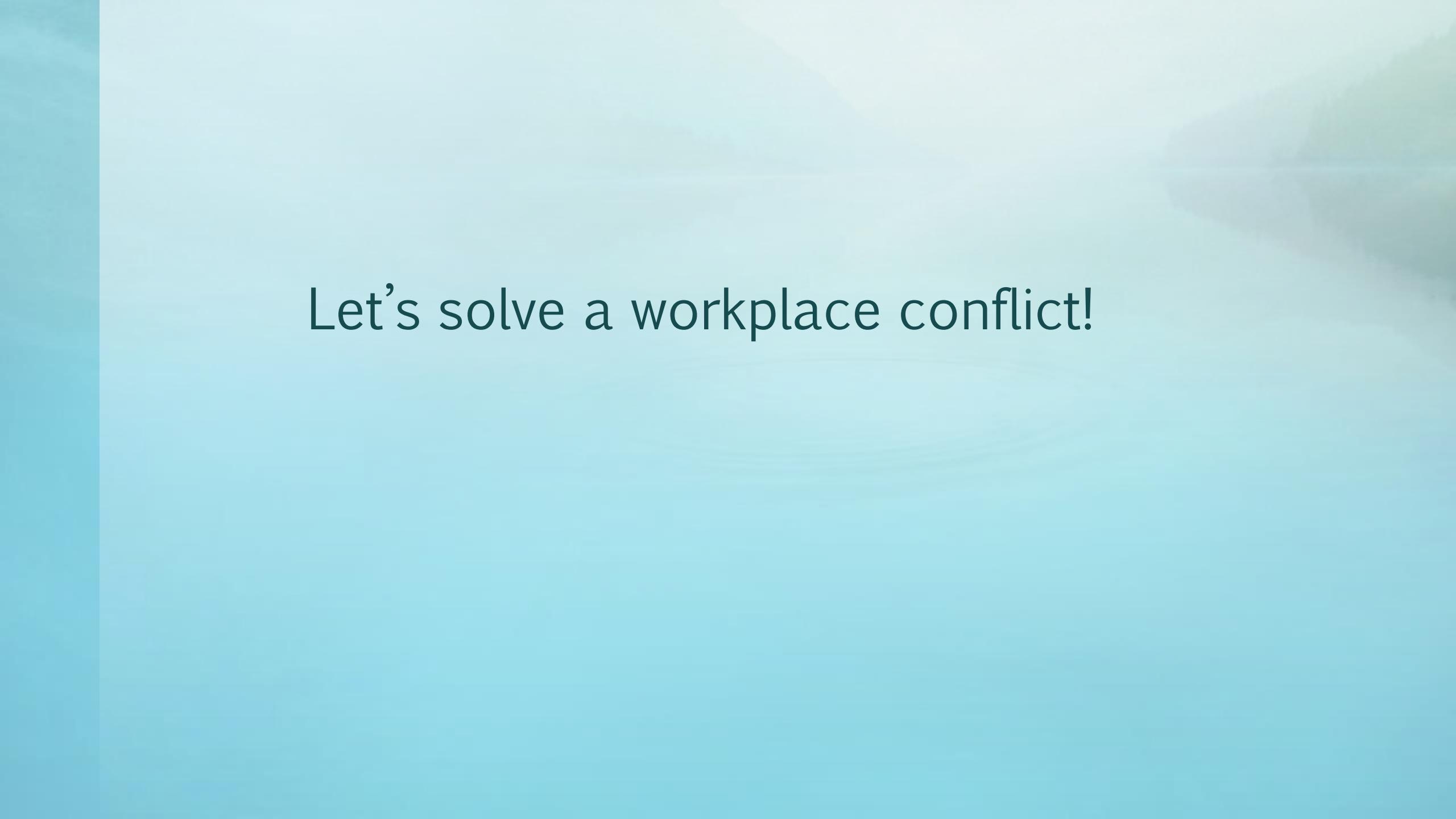
- If various approaches/solutions have been explored, and you are still unsuccessful at resolving the conflict, then it may be best to accept that one or more parties may be dissatisfied with the outcome, and the working relationship may have to change or end.
- This could mean the problem may have to rest at unresolved.

Conclusion

- i. We are different beings, so generally, it is very natural to have conflicts.
- ii. Remember, not all conflict is unhealthy. Using unwarranted aggression towards others or unnecessarily abandoning situations is unhealthy.
- iii. Typical conflict is healthy and necessary. i.e., talking through misunderstandings or differences, in effort to gain a common ground or to solve problems.
- iv. Allowing respect for humanity to become the vehicle to conflict resolution in and outside the workplace can make the world go around much more efficiently.



Any questions?

A person is sitting at a desk in a bright, modern office. They are looking at a laptop screen, which displays a presentation slide with the text "Let's solve a workplace conflict!". The office has large windows in the background, and the overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

Let's solve a workplace conflict!

I asked you all to write out a conflict on a piece of paper. I'm going to pick at least one of these conflicts, and we will discuss how to solve the conflict using a personable and collaborative approach.

Thank you!!

- Contact information listed below and provided via business card.
- Name: Tatiana Richardson
- Email: trich246@gmail.com
- Phone: 616-232-6168