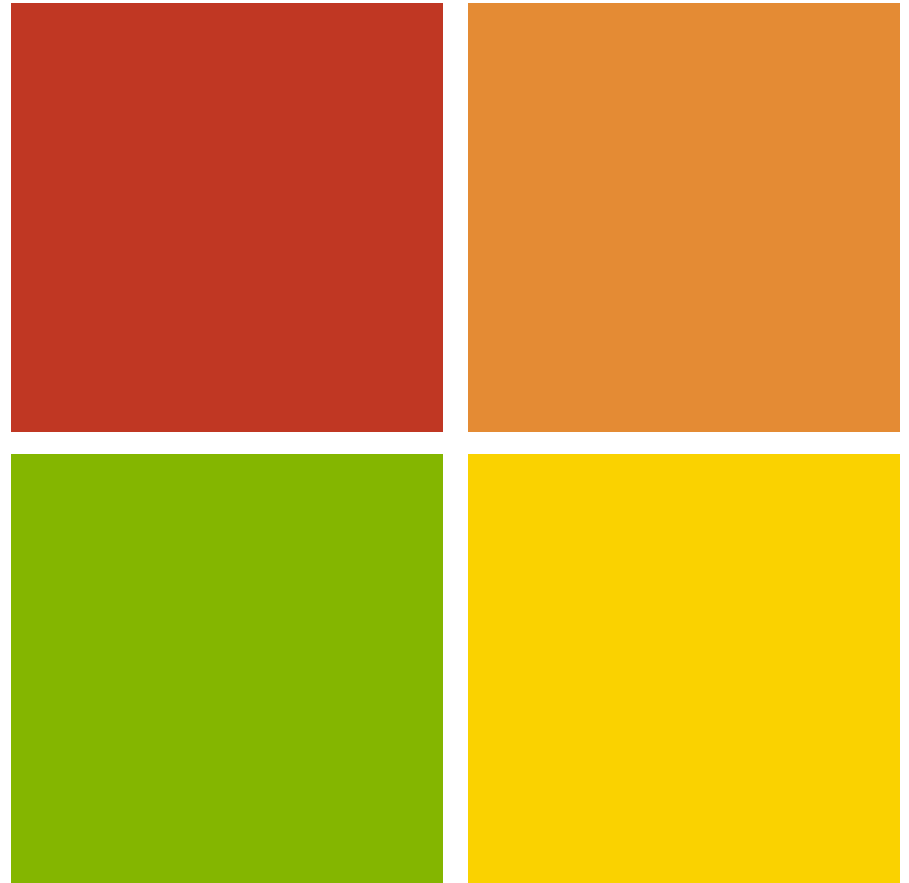


VSPA Mentoring Series



Peer mentoring:
How to establish supportive
relationships with colleagues

Jailza Pauly, PhD
March 20, 2013

Developmental Networks

Higgins & Kram, 2001



Peer mentoring

A process where there is **mutual involvement in encouraging and enhancing learning and development** between two peers, where peers are **people of similar hierarchical status** or **who perceive themselves as equals.**

McDougall & Beattie, 1997



Traditional vs. Peer Mentoring

Kram & Isabella, 1985

Traditional Mentoring

Career-related Functions

- Sponsorship
- Coaching
- Exposure and visibility
- Protection
- Challenging work assignments

Psychosocial Functions

- Acceptance and confirmation
- Counseling
- Role-modeling
- Friendship

Special Attribute

- Complementarity

Peer Mentoring

Career-related Functions

- Information sharing
- Career strategizing
- Job-related feedback

Psychosocial Functions

- Confirmation
- Emotional support
- Personal feedback
- Friendship

Special Attribute

- Mutuality



Possible attributes of peer mentoring relationships

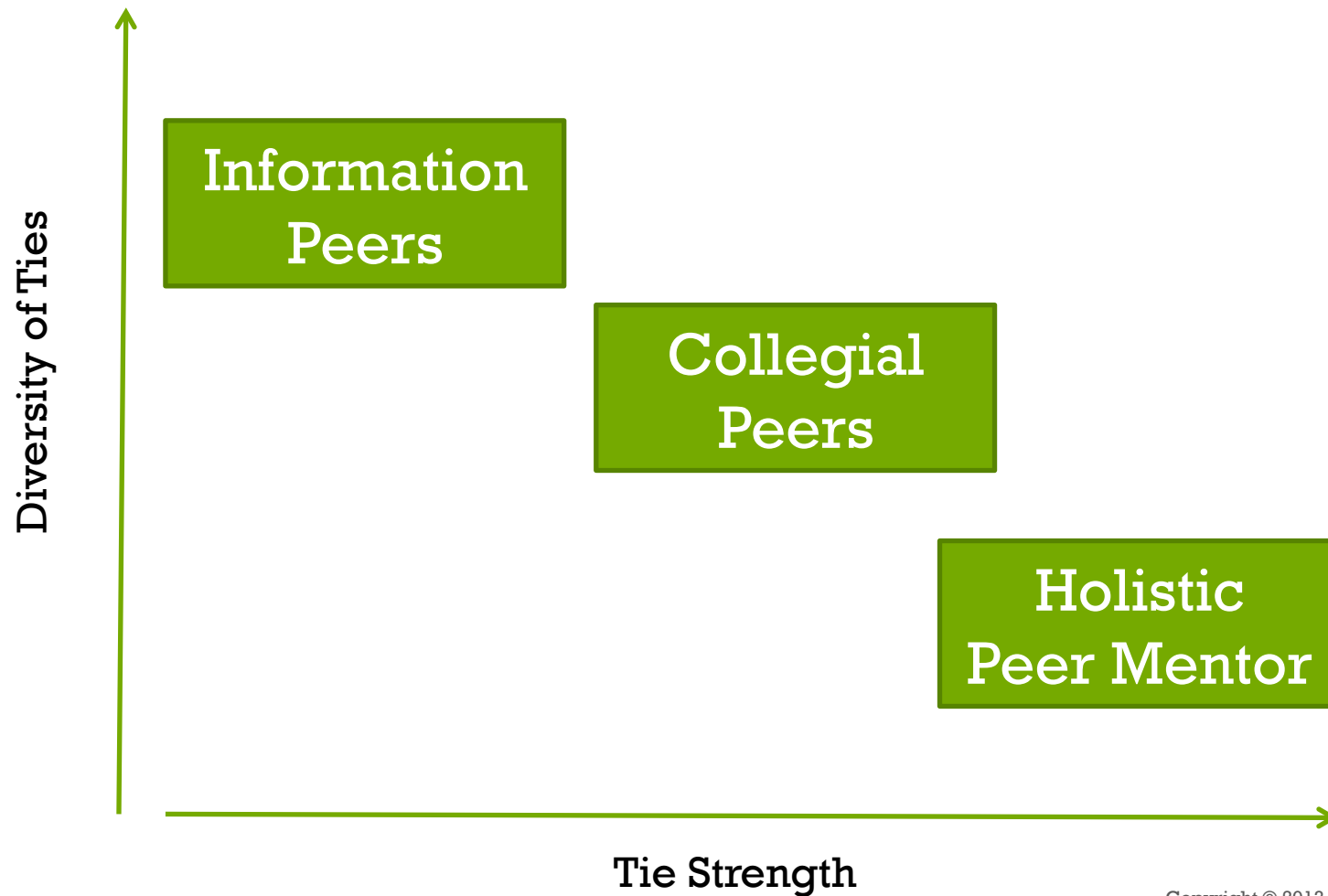
McManus & Russell, 2007

- **Complementarity**
 - Different styles or skills the other lacks or could improve
 - Empathy or mirroring of one's experiences in the other
- **Mutuality**
 - Mutual assistance
 - Trade off of learner and teacher roles
- **Reciprocity**
 - Equal give and take of similar content



Types of peer mentoring relationships

Kram & Isabella, 1985; McDougall & Beattie, 1997



A peer mentoring agreement: Covering the basics

- Establish the **scope** of the relationship and outline what you both want out of it
- Determine **frequency of meetings** and **duration** of relationship
- Clearly articulate **content** and **feedback boundaries**



Building the peer mentoring relationship: Building trust

- Be honest
- Demonstrate integrity *
- Develop credibility
- Trust others



* How consistently do you... ?

adapted from Gebelein et al.,2004

- Keep promises and agreements
- Give honest and complete answers to questions and challenges
- Protect confidential or sensitive information
- Admit you've made a mistake
- Consider the trust and confidence of your co-workers to be important
- Make an effort to foster open, honest, and sincere communication
- Make use of the discipline/academic written code of ethics to guide me making ethical decisions
- Demonstrate consistency between your words and actions



Building effective peer mentoring relationships

adapted from Bacon, 1994


- Develop your **people skills**
- Learn to **tolerate differences** between yourself and others
- Identify other's **operating styles** and how they interact with yours, then compensate
- Focus on **strengths** not weaknesses
- Discover **common** areas of **interest** and create **common goals**
- **Resolve conflict** quickly



Supportive Relationships

- Result in better physical and emotional well-being
- Help people perform better at work and concentrate more on the task at hand
- The nature of effective developmental relationships





Communication and Conflict Management Skills



Supportive Communication

Accurate and honest communication
that does not jeopardize interpersonal
relationships



Attributes of supportive communication

Whetten & Cameron, 2011

- **Congruent**

“Your behavior really upset me.” NOT

“Do I seem upset? No, everything is fine.”

- **Descriptive**

“Here is what happened. Here is my reaction. Here is a suggestion that would be more acceptable.” NOT

“You are wrong for doing what you did.”

- **Problem-Oriented**

“How can we solve this problem?” NOT

“Because of you,

- **Validating**

“I have some ideas, but do you have any suggestions?” NOT

“You wouldn’t understand so let’s do this my way.”



Attributes of supportive communication

Whetten & Cameron, 2011

- **Specific**
“You interrupted me three times during the presentation.” NOT
“You are always trying to get attention.”
- **Conjunctive**
“Relating to what you just said, I’d like to raise a counter-point.”
NOT
“I want to say something (regardless of what you just said)”
- **Owned**
“I have decided to turn down your request because...” NOT
“You have a pretty good idea, but it wouldn’t get funded.”
- **Supportive listening (responding)**
“What do you think are the obstacles to completing the experiment?” NOT
“As I said before, you make too many mistakes. You are just not performing.”



Response types

■ Advising

Provides direction, evaluation, personal opinion or instructions

■ Deflecting

Switches the focus from the communicator's problem to one selected by the listener

■ Probing

Asks a question about what the communicator said or about a topic selected by the listener

■ Reflecting

Mirrors back to the communicator the message that was heard to communicate understanding or acceptance



What is conflict?

Process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something the first party cares about.



Is conflict necessarily bad?

Two forms of conflict with different consequences for individuals, groups and organizations

- Functional
- Dysfunctional

Three types of conflict

- Relationship
- Task
- Process



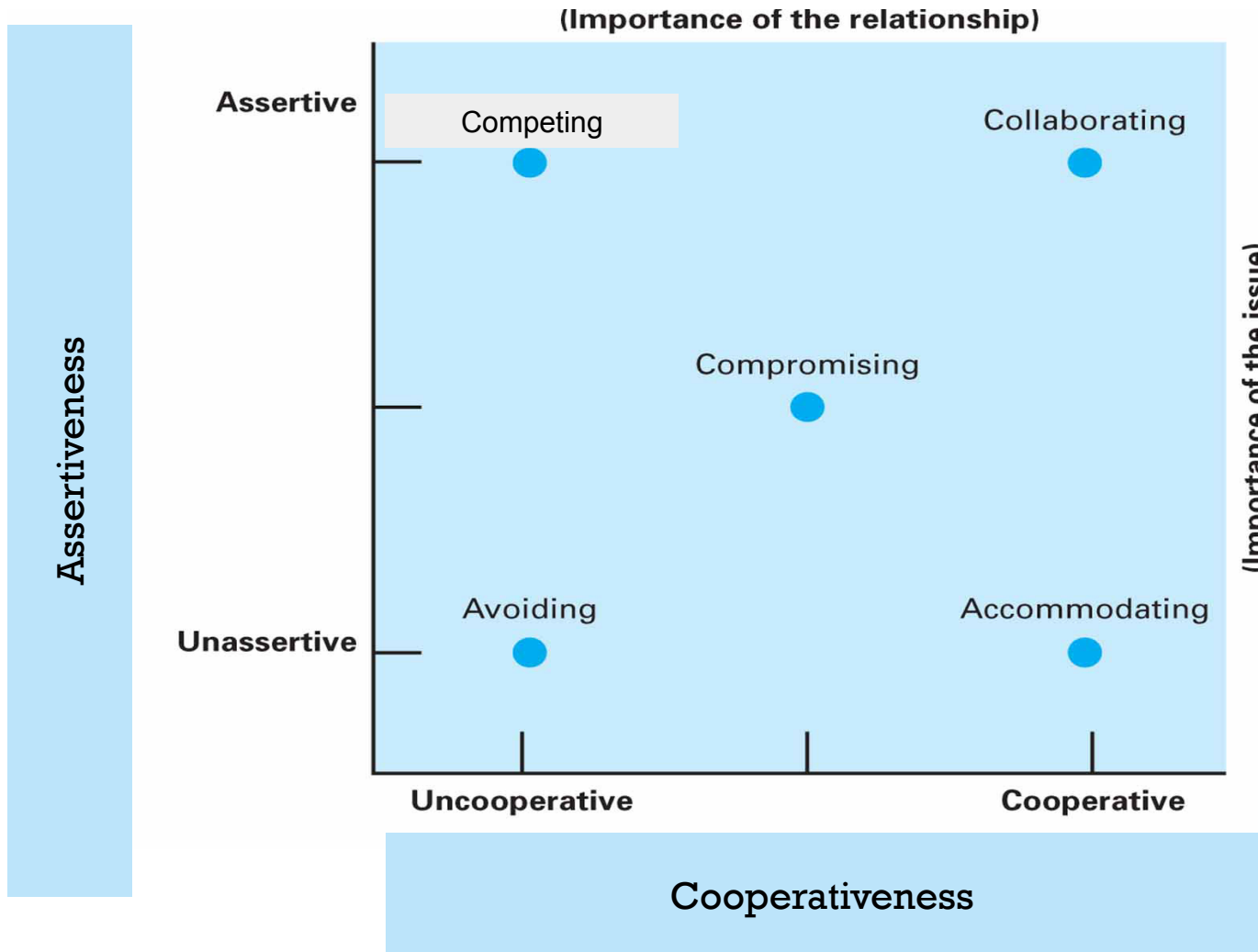
Warning signs of peer conflict

- Feelings of resentment, fear, disappointment, frustration, or anger toward a colleague
- Repeated complains about a colleague
- Effort to maintain the appearance of agreement



Conflict resolution strategies

Thomas, 1992



Managing conflict: Behavioral guidelines

- Collect information about the **type of conflict**
- Examine relevant **situational considerations**
- Take into account your **personal preferences** for the conflict management approaches
- **Utilize the collaborative** approach unless specific conditions dictate the use of an alternative approach



Managing conflict: Behavioral guidelines (cont'd)

- Use **problem-oriented** statements rather than person-oriented statements
- **Communicate congruently** by acknowledging your true feelings without acting them out in destructive ways
- Use **descriptive**, not evaluative, statements
- Use **validating** statements that acknowledge the other person's importance and uniqueness



Managing conflict: Behavioral guidelines (cont'd)

- Use **specific** rather than global statements when correcting behavior
- Use statements that flow smoothly from what was said previously
- **Own your statements**, and encourage the other person to do likewise
- Demonstrate **supportive listening**



Three ideas from our time together

1. **Peer mentors can help you build a robust developmental network** to support your career and personal growth
2. You need to **actively manage peer mentoring relationships**
3. **Supportive communication and conflict management skills help** you maintain effective peer mentoring relationships



Resources

- **Influence: The psychology of persuasion.** Cialdini R (2007). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Cohen C & Cohen S (2012). **Lab dynamics: Management skills for scientists** (2nd Ed). Cold Spring Harbor, NY; Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press.
- **Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in.** Fisher R & Ury W (1992). NY; Penguin Books.
- **The success delusion and Try feedforward instead of feedback** Marshall Goldsmith Library
<http://www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com/html/marshall/resources.html>



Questions?

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