
Skills for Conflict Resolution



Introduction



OVERVIEW OF
CONFLICT
RESOLUTION



DEFINITION,
RELEVANCE, AND
APPLICATIONS



KEY THEORETICAL
FOUNDATIONS



SKILLS AND TOOLS

What is Conflict?



What is Conflict?

Conflict as an
interpersonal,
intragroup, or
intergroup
process



Theoretical Foundations

Core Psychological Theories

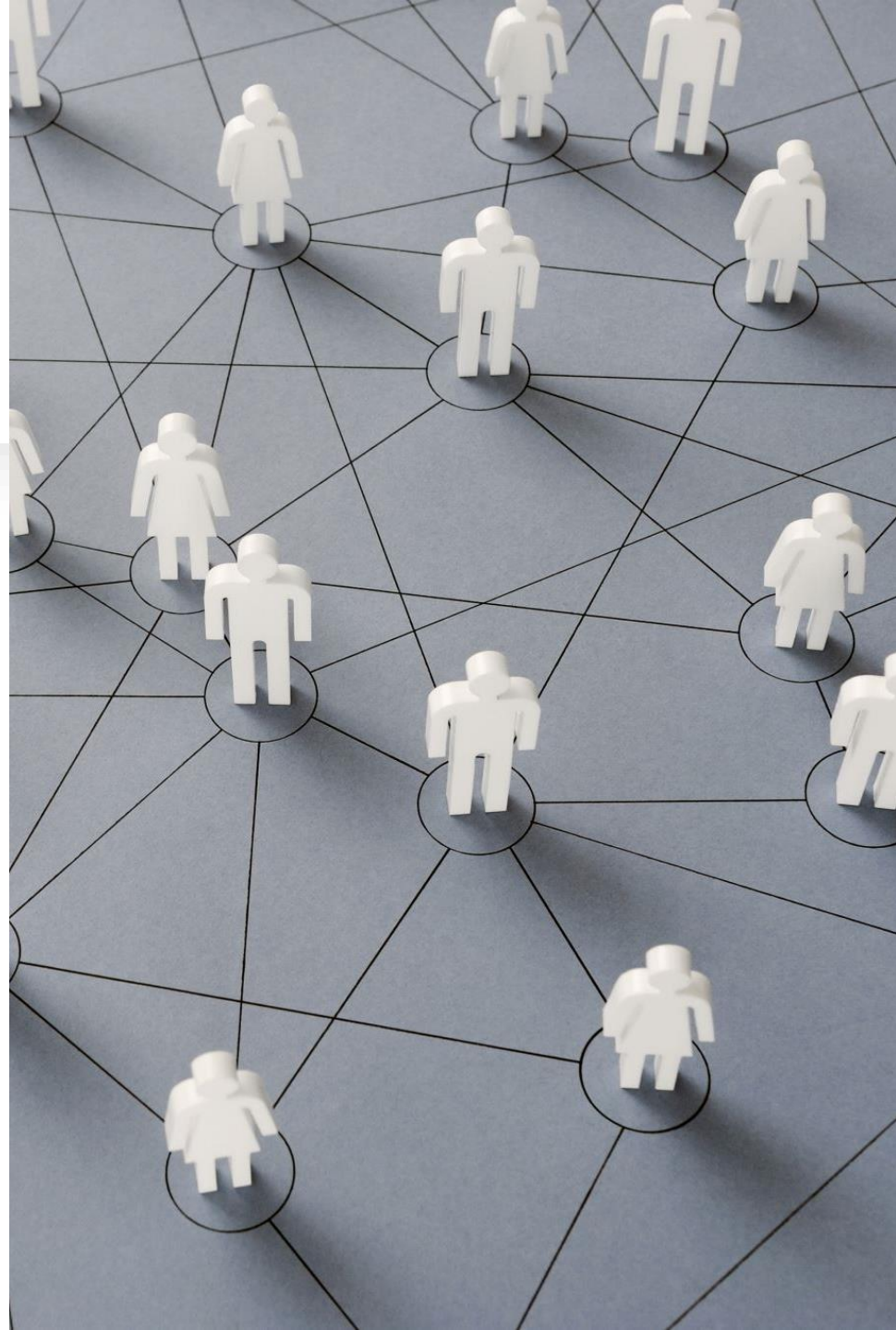
- Social Identity Theory
- Attribution Theory
- Psychodynamic Theory of Conflict

Social Identity Theory

- Tajfel & Turner
- How group membership shapes conflict, ingroup/outgroup dynamics

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner)

- Social Identity Theory proposes that individuals derive a portion of their self-concept from the social groups they belong to. In conflict situations, group-based categorisation can intensify division, amplify stereotypes, and increase the likelihood of intergroup tension when threats to identity occur. In UK workplaces, SIT helps explain conflicts between professional groups (e.g., clinicians vs. management) and the challenges of organisational change.



Attribution Theory

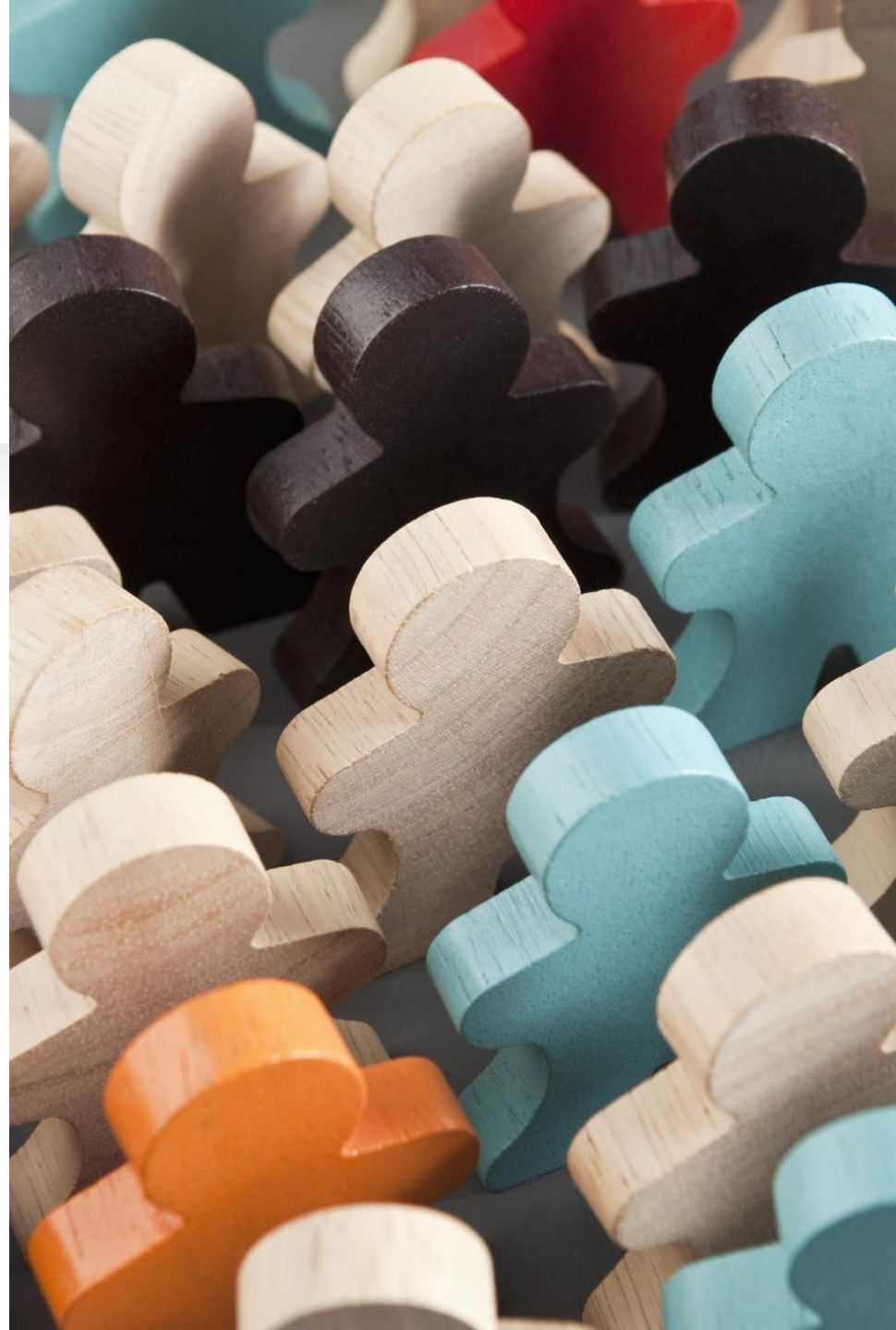
- Heider & Weiner
- Fundamental attribution error, blame, misinterpretation of intent

Psychodynamic Approaches

- Unconscious Processes
- Projection, transference, unmet needs influencing conflict responses

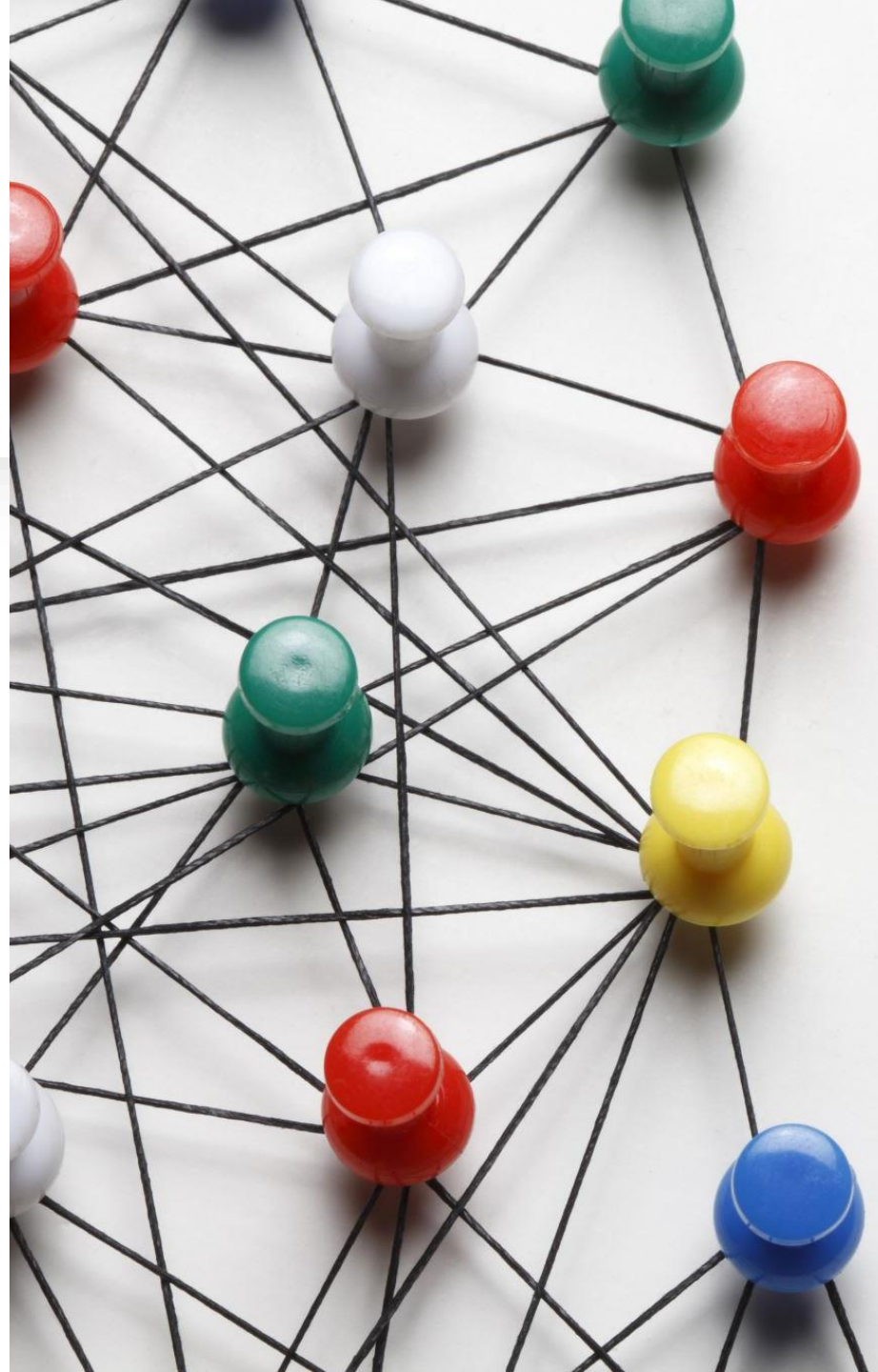
Restorative Justice (RJ) Principles

- Restorative Justice focuses on repairing harm through collaborative dialogue rather than punitive responses. In UK schools and community services, RJ is used to rebuild relationships by giving equal voice to those harmed and those responsible. RJ models support conflict resolution by emphasising accountability, empathy, and reintegration.



Circle Processes

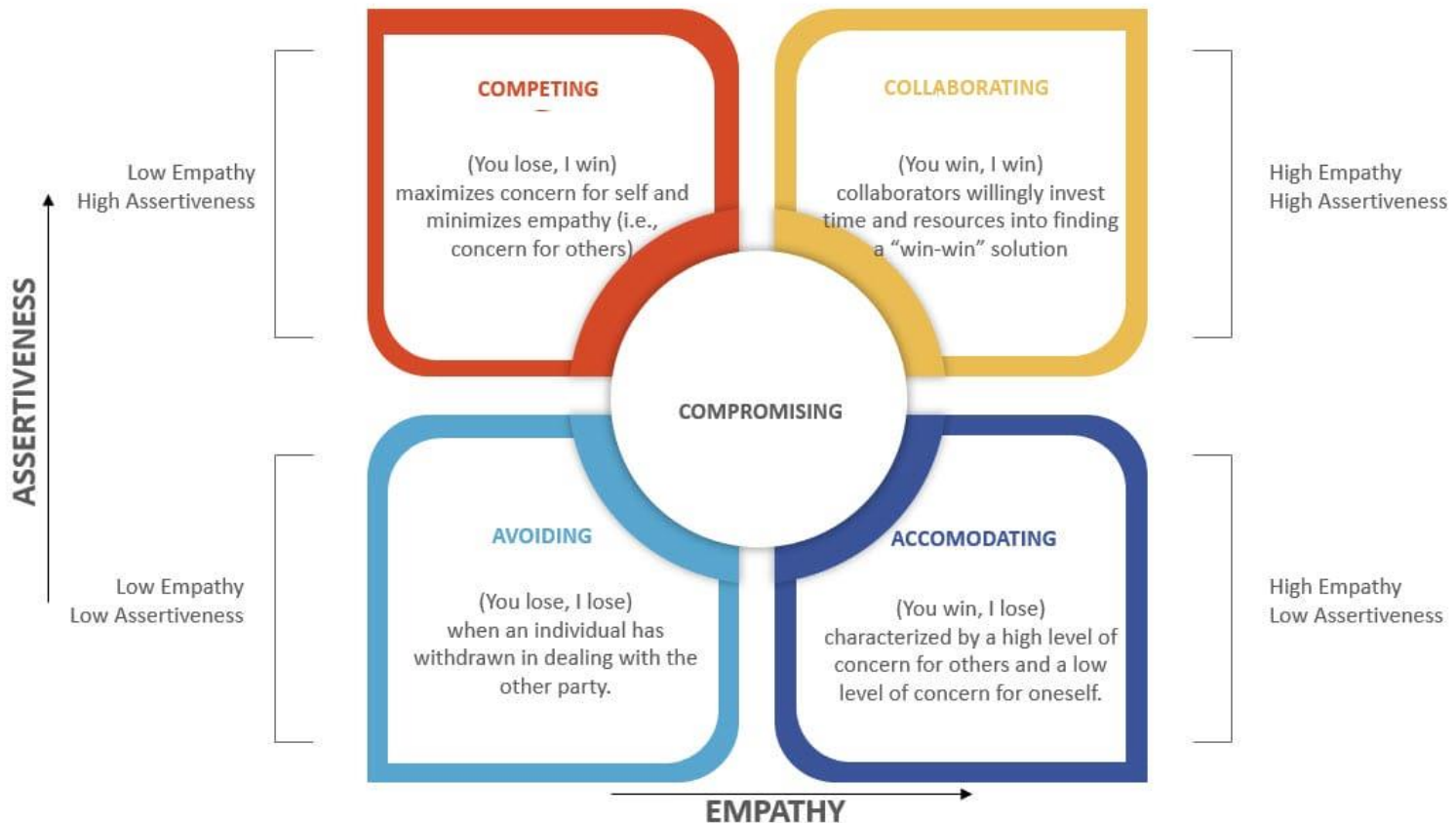
- Circle Processes provide a structured communication format in which all participants are given equal opportunities to speak. Commonly used in educational and community settings, circles promote psychological safety and shared understanding. They work especially well for group-level conflicts and collaborative problem-solving.



Negotiation Theory (BATNA)

- Negotiation Theory emphasises the importance of identifying one's Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA). Understanding BATNA increases bargaining power and reduces the likelihood of accepting an undesirable outcome. In workplace conflict, negotiation frameworks encourage preparation, principled negotiation, and focus on interests rather than positions.

Thomas-Kilmann Model



QG

Conflict Resolution (Thomas-Kilmann model)

Interest-Based Relational Approach

- ❑ Make Relationships the Priority: Treat others with respect, maintain courtesy, and stay calm under pressure.
- ❑ Separate People from Problems: Avoid personal attacks; recognise that differences are often about valid and not just someone being "difficult".
- ❑ Focus on Interests, Not Positions: Look behind stated positions to understand the underlying motivations, needs, and concerns of all parties.
- ❑ Listen First, Talk Second: Actively listen to understand the other person's perspective before presenting your own.
- ❑ Explore Options Together: Collaborate to find solutions that provide mutual benefits.



Principled Negotiation (Harvard)

- ☐ Separate the people from the problem
- ☐ Focus on interests, not positions
- ☐ Brainstorm options for mutual gain
- ☐ Use objective criteria



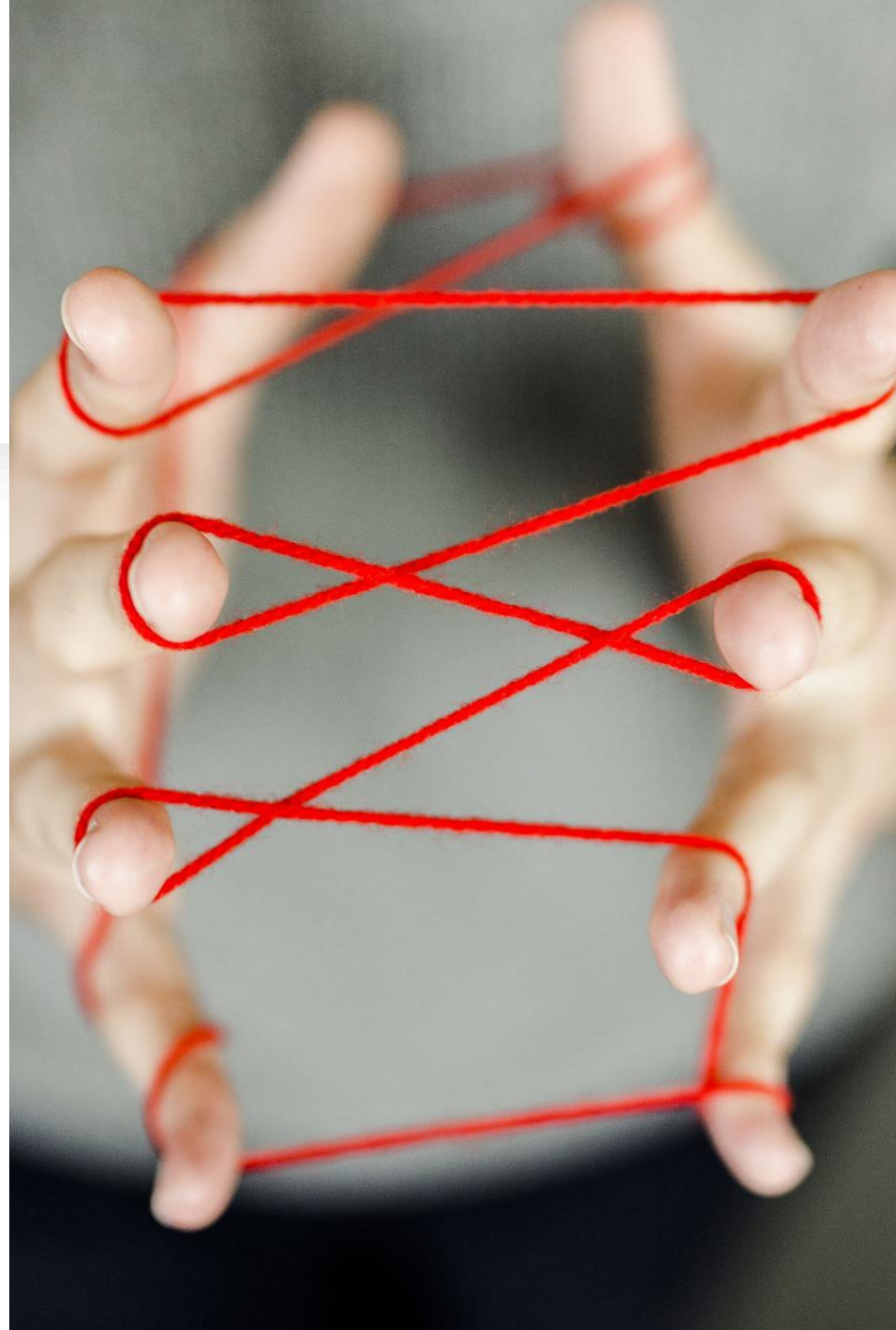
Restorative Cirlces

- ☐ All participants engage willingly.
- ☐ A neutral facilitator
- ☐ Aims to understand the impact of actions, encourage empathy, and collaboratively find solutions.
- ☐ Often includes a check-in, sharing stories, understanding the impact, and forming an agreement.
- ☐ **Core Questions:** Participants explore what happened, who was affected, and what needs to happen to make things right.

[Circle Process: Restorative Circles and Community Building - Mediators Beyond Borders International](#)

Exercise 1

Interactive Exercise: Conflict Styles



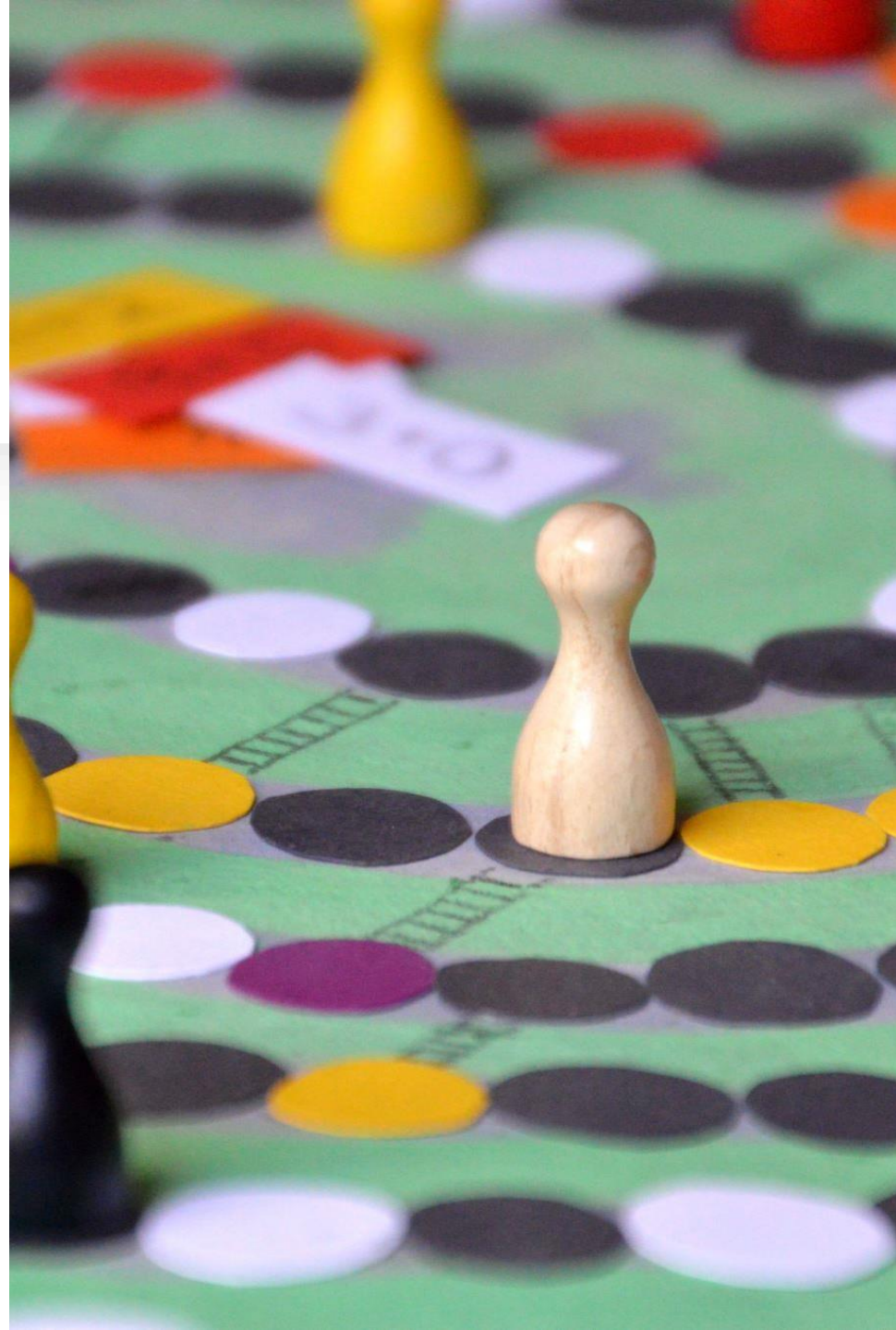
Reminder: Bias & Perception

- Role of Cognitive Bias
- Attribution errors, biases in conflict

Exercise 2

Role-Play Scenario

- Pairs role-play conflict scenario



Applied Practice

- Workplace Conflict
- Case examples and analysis

Mediation

- Structured Intervention
- Mediator role, stages of mediation, psychological mechanisms

Group Task

Group Mediation Activity

- Small groups mediate a mock conflict



Summary



Key Takeaways



Theories, models, skills
practised