

### *Defining "Conflict" in Relationships*

- ▶ "Any social situation or process where two or more social entities are linked in at least one form of antagonistic psychological relation and/or antagonistic interaction" (Fink, 1968)
- ▶ "The interaction of interdependent people who perceive the opposition of goals, aims, and or values, and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realization of the goals, aims, values" (Putnam & Poole, 1987)

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### *Faulty Assumptions about Conflict in Relationships* (Hocker & Wilmot)

- ▶ Harmony is normal, conflict is abnormal.
- ▶ Conflicts and disagreements are the same phenomena.
- ▶ Conflict is indicative of pathology.
- ▶ Conflict should be reduced and avoided, not escalated.
- ▶ Conflict is a clash of personalities.
- ▶ Emotions are different from genuine conflict.

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### *Individual Conflict Styles*

- ▶ Kilman & Thomas:
- ▶ Two dimensions: concern for self versus concern for other
- ▶ Four styles: avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising, collaborating

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### *Relational Systems Styles of Conflict*

- ▶ Cuber & Haroff:
- ▶ Conflict habituated-- unproductive fights
- ▶ Devitalized-- full avoidance
- ▶ Passive-congenial-- calm, ordered
- ▶ Vital--intense mutual sharing of important life events
- ▶ Total-- sharing all, fulfilling all

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### *Relational Systems Styles of Conflict*

- ▶ Fitzpatrick:
- ▶ Separates, Independents, Traditionals
- ▶ Olsen:
- ▶ Cohesion and adaptation
- ▶ Rigid-Structured-Flexible-Chaotic

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### *Conflict Tactics*

- ▶ Examples of competitive tactics:
- ▶ Faulting-- criticize character
- ▶ Rejection-- of proposal and other
- ▶ Hostile questioning-- asked to find fault
- ▶ Hostile joking
- ▶ Presumptive attribution-- Statements that attribute qualities to other
- ▶ Prescription-- Demand of change
- ▶ Violence-- use of force to ensure one's will

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## *Conflict Tactics*

- ▶ Examples of cooperative tactics:
- ▶ Description--non-evaluative comments
- ▶ Qualification-- limit scope of focus
- ▶ Soliciting disclosure
- ▶ Negative inquiry-- solicit complaints about one's self
- ▶ Empathy/support
- ▶ Accepting responsibility
- ▶ Initiating problem-solving

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