



Identity and Conflict

Introduction

- Identity drives many conflicts
- Identity protection implicates
 - Self-esteem and self-confidence
 - Sense of respect and dignity
 - Justice and fair treatment
- Identity attacks escalate conflicts
- Understanding identity is crucial to peacemaking

The difficulty of identity conflicts

- Difficult to articulate
- Visceral reaction
- Ascription to other causes/symbols

Psychological Foundations

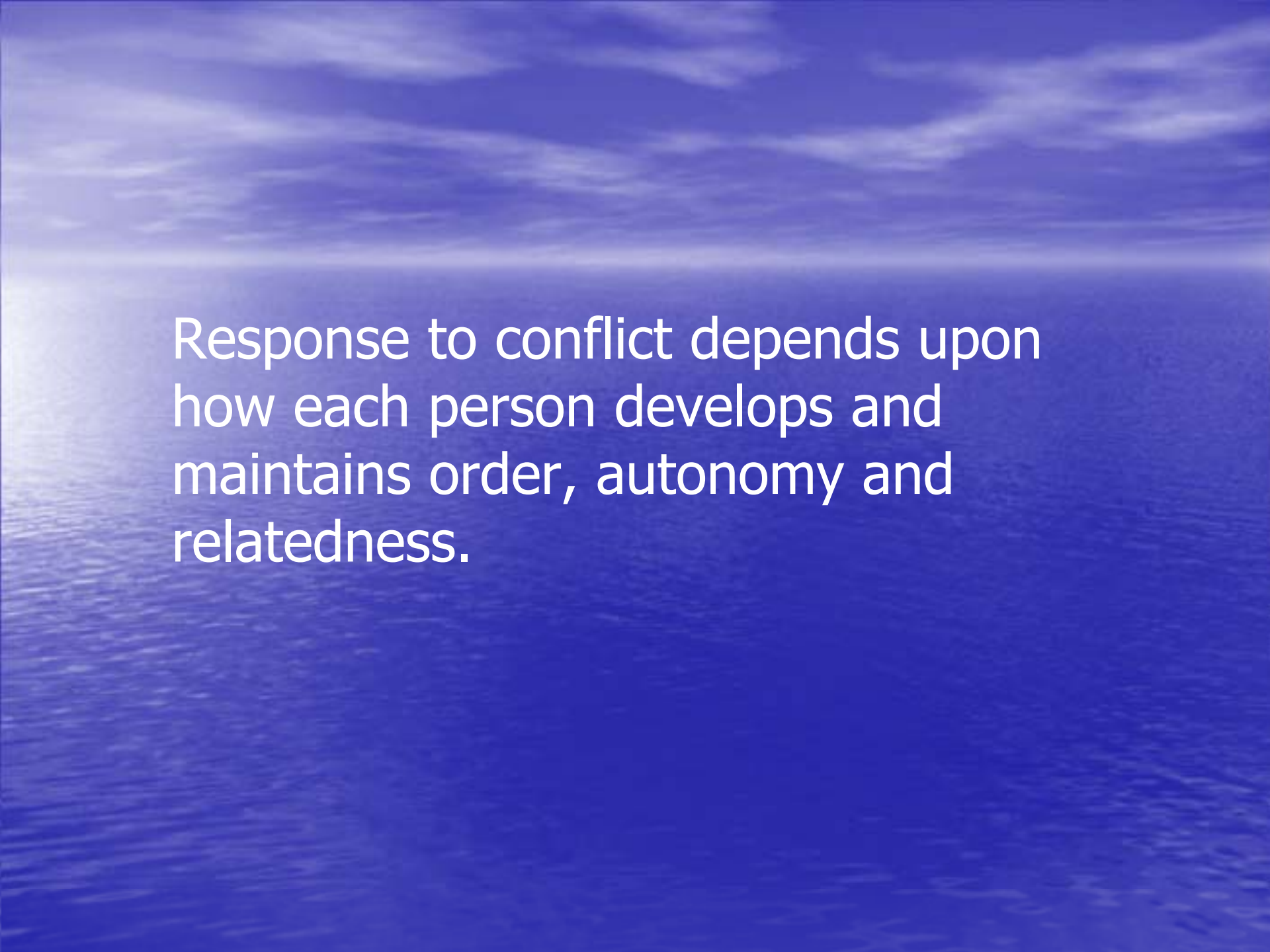
- Order—predictability in life
- Autonomy—control over life to meet basic needs
- Relatedness—social interaction with others

Normal Identity

- Order achieved through self-control
- Autonomy achieved by choice creation
- Relatedness achieved through trust

Abnormal Identity

- Order achieved through control of others
- Autonomy achieved as assertion of power over others
- Relatedness achieved as profound distrust of others



Response to conflict depends upon how each person develops and maintains order, autonomy and relatedness.

Identity cannot be compromised

- Dignity, self-esteem cannot be gained or lost through bargaining
- Objective issues become symbols of identity
- Bargaining over symbols diminishes importance of identity
- People would therefore rather fight than concede

The Neurological Foundations of Identity

- The proto-self
- Core consciousness
- The autobiographical self

The Proto-Self

- Boundaries
- Stability
- Management system creates a neural representation of the body—called the proto-self

Core Consciousness

- Knowledge that materializes instantaneously and preconsciously
- Operates at much higher speeds than consciousness
- Essence is the feeling of “I-ness”
- Totally in the present, subsides during sleep

The Autobiographical Self

- Fleeting moments of knowledge can be converted to memory, categorized, and analyzed
- Self-image of who we are constructed from autobiographical memories
- Autobiographical self created from preconscious processes
- Certain sets of memories reactivated moment to moment creates sense of personal identity

Conflict and Identity

- Information dissonant with neural patterns evokes intense reactions
- Identity conflict is therefore the external information contradicting internal neural patterns

Cognitive Psychodynamics

- Another theory of identity based on person schemas
- Schemas are frameworks for interpreting sensory information
- Person schemas relate to identity and relationships
 - Self schemas
 - Other schemas

Relationships and Conflict

- People seek out attachment for identity validation
- Nevertheless, people act in ways that deny attachments and cause conflict
- These actions are based on role relationships developed from schemas
- Preconscious, but can be consciously modified

Face and Impression Management

- Concepts of face
- Impression management

Concepts of Face

- Positive face=self-esteem, self-respect, positive views of self
- Negative face=autonomy, privacy, respect of perogatives

Face Requires Relationship

- We seek confirmation of self-perception
- We assume social roles that communicate self-perception
- We discourage mistaken impressions
- We seek feedback if it confirms self-perceptions
- Impression management describes all of these processes

Impression Management

- Improvised process of projecting self-identity
- Consists of
 - Identity enhancement
 - Identity protection
 - Identity adjustment

Identity Enhancement

- Strengthen self-perception
- Strengthen perception of others (other-perception)
- We select an identity that
 - More positive than our current self-concept
 - We can reasonably claim and achieve

Enhancing Behaviors

- Self-perception
 - Self promotion
 - False modesty
 - Self deprecation
 - Self presentation
- Other-perception
 - Intimidation
 - Flattery
 - Enhancing others
 - Conformity
 - Favors

Conflict Arising from Enhancement

- People bid for superior self-identity
- Manifested in
 - Competitive behavior
 - Beating the other person
 - Being on top
- Adaptive value: Superior claim on resources increases fitness for survival
- Maladaptive: Cooperation is lost as identity conflict develops

Enhancement Failure

- Identity denial occurs
- Bid for self-esteem rejected
- Leads to shame, embarrassment, and humiliation
- Remedy: The parties must acknowledge each other

Identity Protection

- Used when identity is threatened
- Tends to be reactive
- Strategies are defensive

Protection Behaviors

- Self-perception
 - Disclaimers
 - Handicapping
 - Accounts
 - Excuses
 - Justifications
- Other-perception
 - Apology
 - Restitution
 - Ingratiation
 - Flattery

Identity Adjustment

- An identity attack is successful
- Cannot be defused by identity defenses
- Causes identity defeat

Adjustment Behaviors

- Self-perception
 - Self deprecation
 - Sense of strategic failure
 - Handicapping
- Other-perception
 - Disobedience
 - Rebellion
 - Noncompliance
 - Passive-aggressive tactics

Face in Conflict

- Early weapon of choice
- Maintain own face by attacking other
- Peacemaking perspectives:
 - Face costs nothing to give
 - Face is not negotiable
 - Face is an infinite resource

Social Identity

- Categorization
- Identification
- Comparison

Categorization

- Making sense and creating order
- Understand social environment
- Categorization tells us something about people
- Stereotyping is inappropriate categorizing

Identification

- Locates “me” in “us”
- Defines role within a group
- Similarities join people together—they are said to identify with each other

Comparison

- Self-esteem generated from positive comparison
- Example: Membership in a prestigious group affords positive comparison to non-members

Social Identity Is Dynamic

- Each person assumes many identities
- Identities vary according to social space
- Identities vary in
 - Duration
 - Volume
- Lifestylers, Commuters, Integrators

How the Legal System Escalates Identity Conflicts

- No remedies for identity conflicts
- Legal system appears to reject claim of identity
- Translation of identity conflict to damages
 - Fear of malingering/fraud
 - Adversary ideology leads to attacks on identity

Summary

- Need for autonomy vs. dependence on others for self-esteem
- In highly escalated conflicts, parties are dependent upon each other for face



The End