

Reducing Conflict 97 Cliques

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Within any organization, the existence of cliques can lead to significant conflict. In this article, I will discuss why this occurs and offer some advice for control.

Whenever there are “family” groups within an organization, the tendency toward forming cliques is present. Groups tend to put up walls of contact and access that separate the groups. I will describe several

of the symptoms and causes.

Cliques can lead to conflict for various reasons. Here are several factors that contribute to conflict within and between groups:

Exclusion. Cliques often form by excluding certain individuals or groups. The isolation creates feelings of rejection. This exclusion can lead to conflict between the members and those who feel left out.

Power struggles. Within a clique, power dynamics may emerge, with some members trying to control others.

Competition for resources. Different groups compete for limited resources, such as funding, management attention, or access to space. This competition can escalate into conflicts. Members strive to secure their positions within the clique and maintain their share of resources.

Reinforcement of stereotypes. Cliques often reinforce stereotypes and create divisions among different social groups. This process can lead to conflict between cliques that perceive each other negatively based on biases.

Groupthink. Cliques tend to encourage conformity and discourage independent thinking. Members conform to group norms and opinions without critical evaluation. Conflicts can arise when dissenting views or ideas are challenged or suppressed.

Bullying and aggression. In some cases, cliques may engage in bullying or aggressive behavior towards individuals or other groups.

In-group favoritism. These groups often exhibit strong in-group favoritism, where members prioritize the interests of their clique. This favoritism can create conflicts when the interests of the clique clash with those outside of it.

Perceived threats. Cliques may perceive external individuals or groups as threats to their status or identity. This perception can escalate conflicts as the groups defend their positions.

Lack of empathy. Groups may foster an "us versus them" mentality. You can observe a lack of empathy for those outside of the group. This condition hinders open communication and cooperation.

Conclusion

It is important to note that while cliques are often a source of conflict, not all of them are bad. Healthy and inclusive cliques can exist. They promote positive relationships and shared interests without causing harm or division. Just be alert to any negative signs cropping up.

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