

# CHALLENGING THE STEREOTYPE

What is the Canadian approach to conflict?



## Introduction

- Welcome to our webinar on conflict in the workplace.
- Today's webinar is presented by Psychometrics Canada.
  - We provide assessment solutions and strategic guidance to help our clients 1) identify talent, 2) develop potential and 3) enhance organizational performance.
  - We offer a comprehensive range of valid and reliable assessment solutions to meet diverse organizational needs.



This webinar will be recorded.

- Both the recording and the slides will be made available after the webinar.

Please feel free to ask questions using the “Ask a question” button.

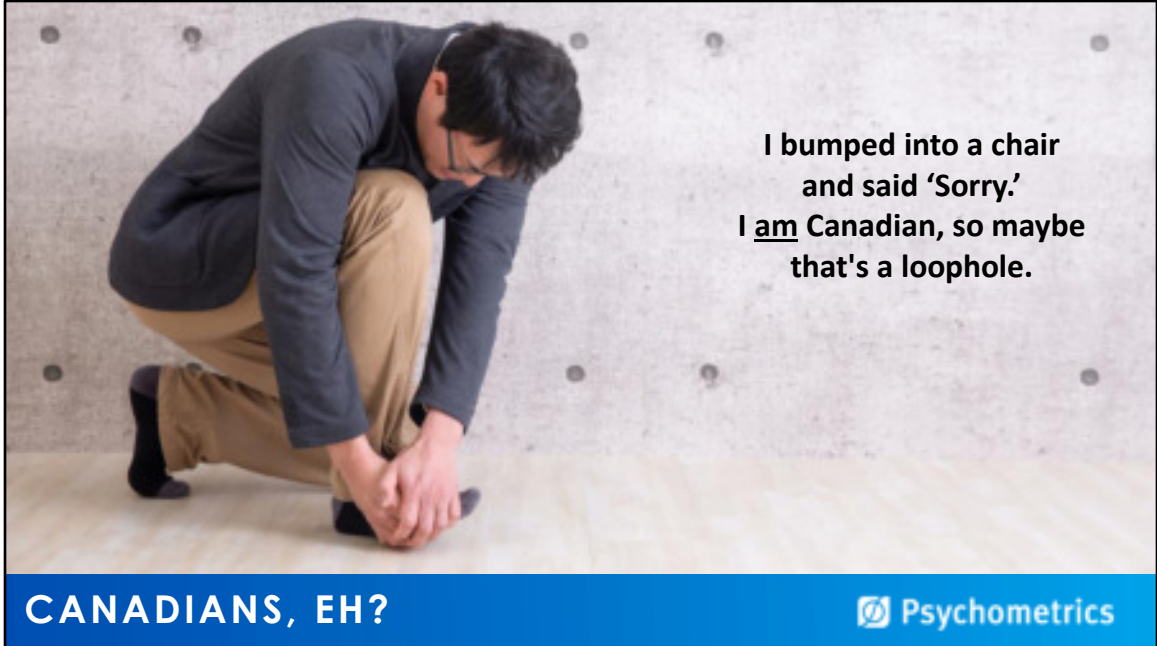
- Some questions will be answered live at the end of the webinar.
- All questions will be answered in writing after the webinar.



**POLL #1**

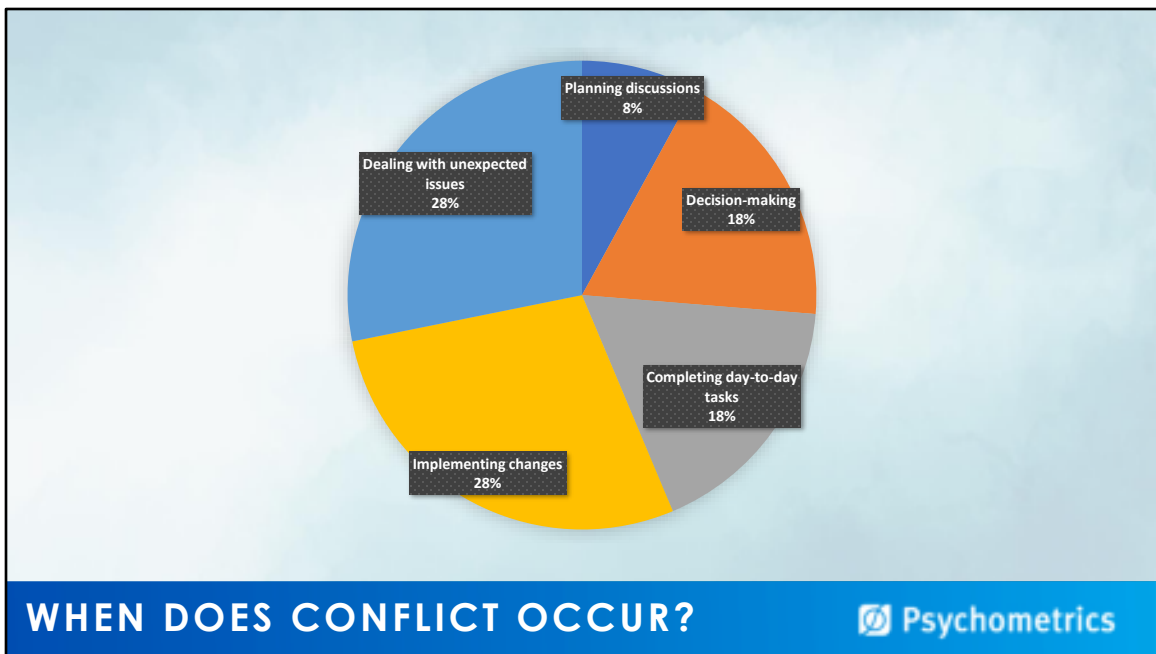
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How many of you have stubbed your toe, say on a chair, and apologized to the inanimate object?



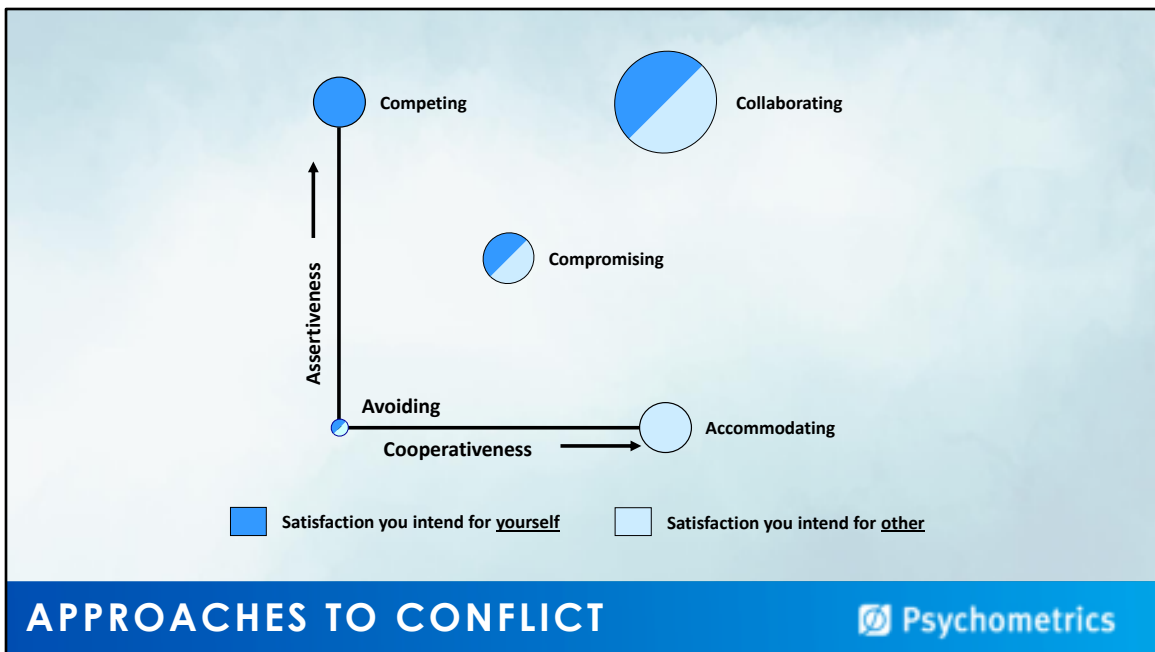
Canadians are stereotyped as the “friendly and polite” country who would likely avoid conflict or cave to pressure when needed.

- But are we actually?



Data from the 2020 People Trends Report

- Top issues are those where flexibility or adaptation is needed (higher stress situations).
- Disagreements can also occur during routine operations, but less often (differences of opinion).
- Less conflict occurs when trying to plan in advance.



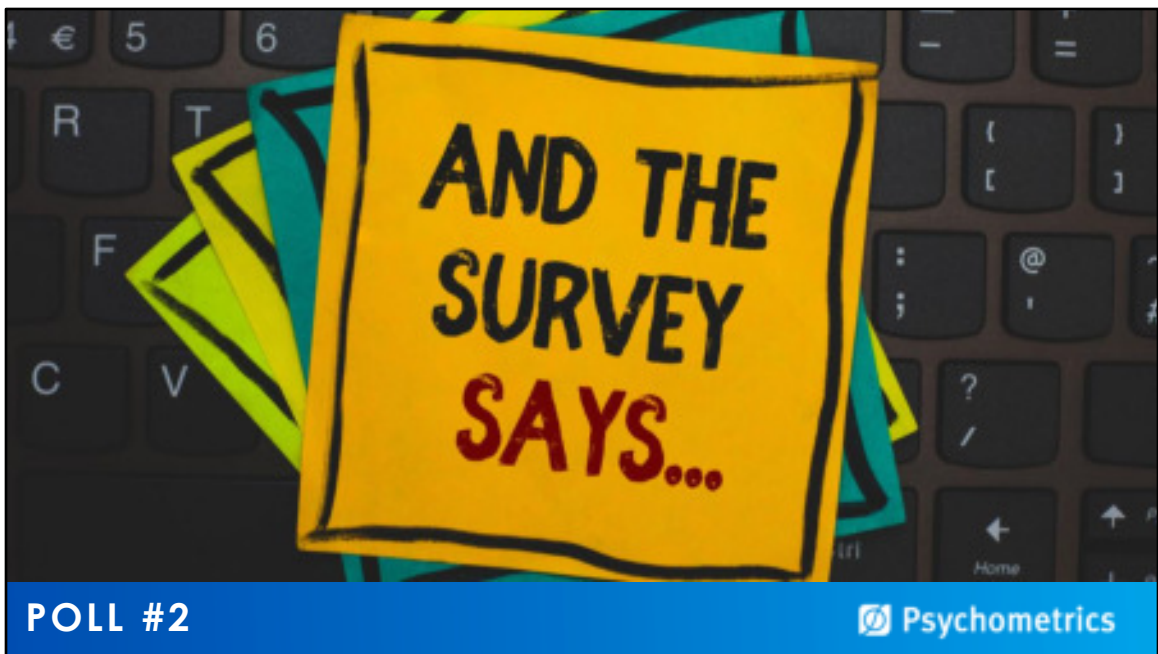
Conflict: The situation in which the concerns or needs of two people appear to be incompatible.

Your approach to conflict is determined by your needs at the time of conflict: Your need and that of others.

- On the vertical axis, your needs are considered. When you are looking to get everything that you need (whether or not others get what they need), this results in the Competing style.
- On the horizontal axis, the needs of others are considered. When you are willing to provide for the needs of others (at the cost of your own), this results in the Accommodating style.
- In between these two styles is the Compromising style, where everyone gets something they want (but not everything).
- However, if the intention is for no one to get anything that they want, this creates the Avoiding style.
- On the complete opposite end, if everyone can get everything that they want, this creates a Collaborative solution to the conflict.

We don't use one style exclusively.

- We actually use all of these different styles, depending on the situation.
- However, we have a style that we rely on more heavily.
  - We use them more often and develop more skills based around this approach.



What do you think your preferred approach to conflict is?

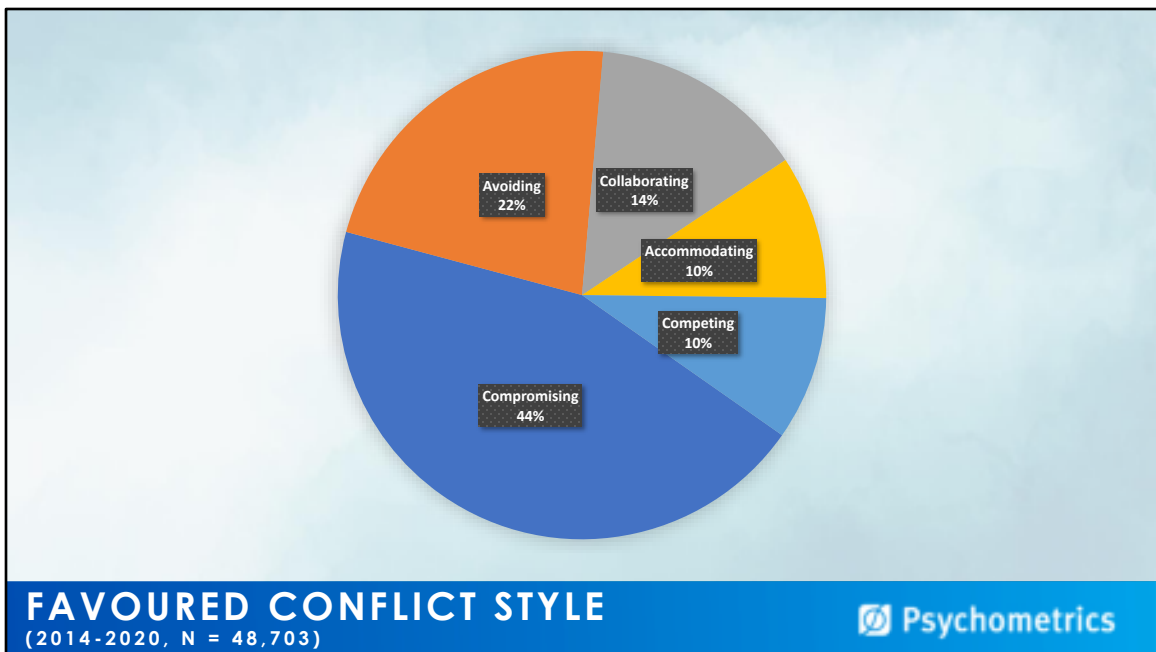
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Collaborating
- Accommodating
- Competing





Data from the 2020 People Trends Report

- When asked which styles they observe people using, Avoiding came out on top, while Collaborating/Compromising were the least observed (and close in number of observations).
- It's entirely possible that Avoiding, Competing and Accommodating are much easier to observe.
  - Avoiding may stand out, as it elicits a stronger emotional response (e.g. "They're trying to run away.")
- Meanwhile, Collaborating and Compromising are harder resolutions to establish, so they are seen less often.



Based on the descriptions of the styles above, you may have expected that Accommodating would be the most frequent natural style for Canadians. However, it seems that there is purpose behind our polite demeanor.

- Canadians tend to take a Compromising approach to conflict, which means that we are willing to give up something that we want if everyone gets something that they want.
  - It's very pragmatic (weighing of the pros and cons).
  - Less aggressive than Competing, not as cooperative as Accommodating.
- Useful when the parties involved in the conflict cannot agree on a win-win solution, so a workable middle-ground is necessary.
  - Great as a temporary solution until a better one can be developed (decision needs to be made quickly).
  - Ideal when a situation is too complex to find a win-win solution



- When compromising: Make sure that you're not settling short.
  - Are you agreeing to a compromise that meets your minimal needs? This is when it crosses over into Accommodating.
- Is there a benefit to being more competitive?
  - There may be a lot of us who are trading away something that we actually needed, in order to create a compromise.
  - We may be missing opportunities where, if we pushed a little harder, we might have gained a benefit that we could have actually used.
- How can avoiding be used effectively?
  - Avoiding is great when emotions are running high.
  - It provides everyone space to compose themselves and think about what they need.

1. Is the situation simple (unidimensional) or complex (multi-dimensional)?
2. Do we trust each other enough to be open about our needs and concerns?
3. Does the environment allow us to share our needs and concerns?
4. Do we communicate effectively with each other?
5. How much time do we have to resolve this conflict?
6. How important is the topic to me?
7. How important is the topic to the other side?
8. How important is our relationship?

## PRACTICAL ADVICE



Whatever your favoured style is, it may not be the best approach to every conflict.

- Remember, we can use all of these styles.
- But, how do you know which approach to use? Ask yourself the following questions [see slide].

Based on your answers to these questions, you can choose the approach that will provide the ideal outcome.

- If there is enough time and trust between both parties to effectively communicate, then Collaboration might be possible.
- If parts of the topic are important, but there isn't much time, then a Compromise might be possible.
- However, if the topic is very important to you but the relationship isn't, then a Competing approach may be an option.



How has conflict changed?

- It hasn't gone virtual quite like this (yet).
- [Condo board meeting example] – A Director felt like they weren't getting what they wanted (in terms of decisions made), and decided to hang up on the call. Because 6/7 Directors were present, decisions were made without their vote.
  - It's easier to use Avoiding strategies now (don't answer or exit conversations with less social pressure)...which could be inadvertently turn into Accommodating.
- The basic dynamics of conflict haven't changed, but the execution and strategies used can be different.
  - The questions on the previous slide still work in today's world.



## WEBINAR TAKE AWAY

 Psychometrics

If there was one thing that I'd like you to take away from this webinar...

- The 5 styles and the 8 questions.

If nothing else though...

- It's ok not to apologize when you stub your toe next time, the chair won't be offended.



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