Frustration and conflicts

Module Details

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4.	Module Name	Frustration and conflicts
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   b. Connotations of Frustration
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I. **Objectives:**

At the end of the session learners will be able to:

- Define Frustration
- Explain Connotations and Sources of Frustration
- Identify consequneces of Frustration
- Define Conflict
- Identify Changing perspectives regarding Conflicts
- Describe the process of conflicts

II. FRUSTRATION

1)Conceptual definition of Frustration:

It's a deep chronic sense of insecurity, discouragement and dissatisfaction arising from thwarted desires, inner conflicts or other unresolved problems. Freud (1933) defined Frustration as an unpleasant state which emerges whenever a pleasure-seeking or pain-avoiding behavior is blocked.

2) Connotations of Frustration:

  i)   When progress towards a desired goal is interfered with, delayed or met with obstacles, it causes frustration
  ii)   The barriers coming in the path of one's goals can come from either the external physical environment or from factors within an individual
  iii) Frustration gives rise to an unpleasant emotional state that results from blocked goal-seeking behavior
  iv)   The responses to frustrating situations determine the adequacy of one's adjustment in life
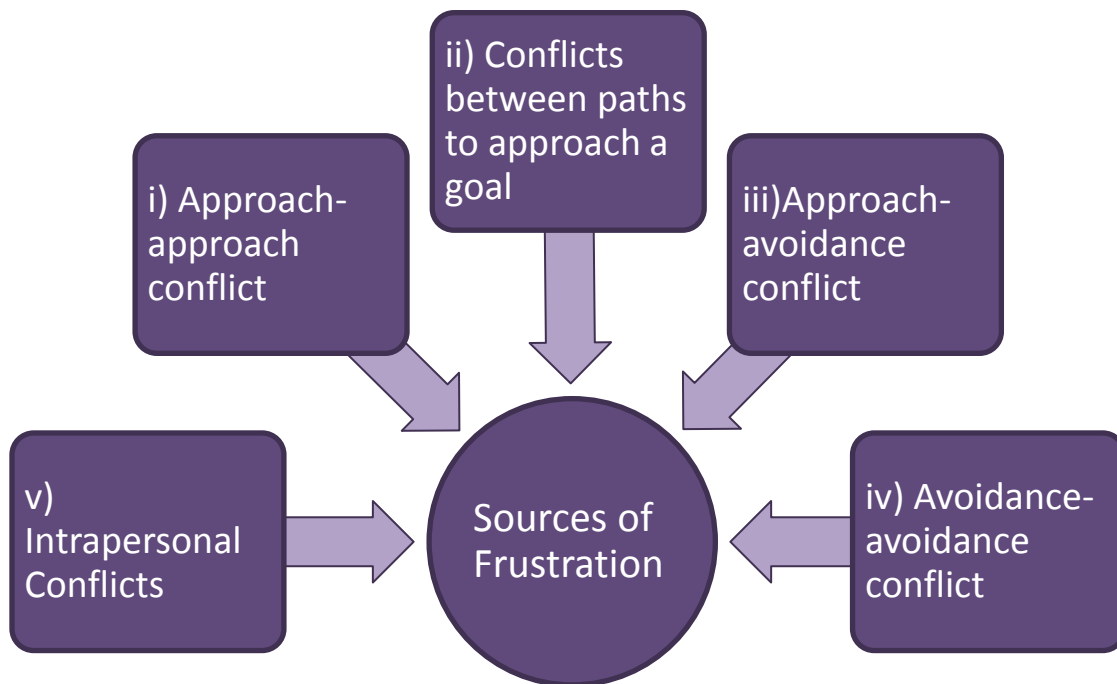
        The cycle leading to Frustration can be illustrated as below. Any barriers in moving from Stage 2 to Stage 3 can give rise to feelings of Frustration
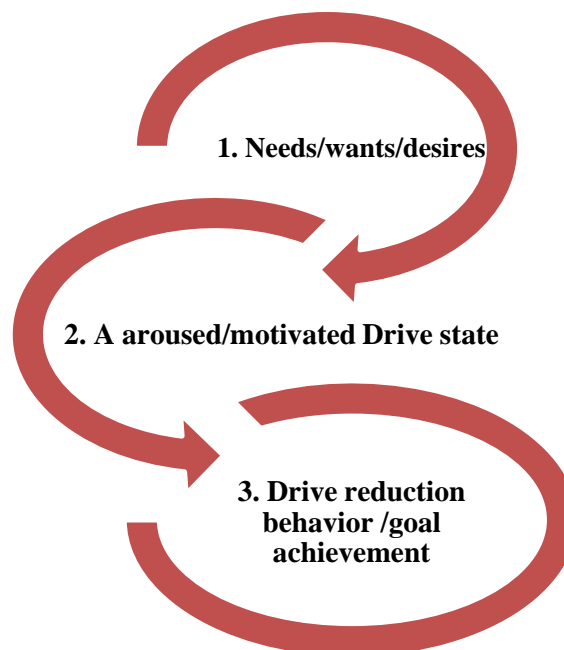
3) Sources of Frustration:

  i)   Approach-approach conflict involving two desirable goals: in this situation, the satisfaction of one motive leads to the frustration of the other motive
  ii)   Conflicts between paths to approach a single goal: this occurs when there are various ways of approaching a single goal and these paths to the goal diverge from each other

iii) Approach-avoidance conflict: in this situation, a single goal is both desirable and undesirable. The individual faces an ambivalent state about whether to approach or avoid the goal attainment

iv) Avoidance-avoidance conflict involving two undesirable goals: in this situation, the individual desires to avoid both the goals, but can avoid only one goal

v) Intrapersonal Conflicts: this happens when expectations from an individual (by others and herself) conflict with her internal standards involving her values, beliefs and motives.

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        ii) Conflicts
        between paths
        to approach a
        goal

i) Approach-                    iii)Approach-
approach                        avoidance
conflict                        conflict

v)                              iv) Avoidance-
Intrapersonal    Sources of     avoidance
Conflicts        Frustration    conflict
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4) <u>Consequences of Frustration</u>:

   i)   <u>Biological</u>: it can cause following impairments in the functioning of one's body:
   - Heart diseases
   - Respiratory problems
   - Digestive problems
   - Decrease in body's immunity
   - Sleep disturbances
   - Lifelong problems, like, asthma, ulcer, cancer, allergy

   ii) <u>Psychological</u>: the mental state of the individual can get altered in following ways:
   - Dissatisfaction, disinterest, boredom
   - Anxiety, tension, depression

   - Decrease in person's efficiency at home and work
   - Decrease in person's self-confidence and self-esteem
   - Mood swings, improper affective state

iii) <u>Social effects</u>: the person's interactions with others can get impaired as follows:
- Poor interpersonal relationships at home and work
- Prone to substance abuse, indulging in delinquent behavior

III. **CONFLICTS**

1) **Definition of Conflict:**

<u>Conflict at Intrapersonal level</u>: a process when one's motive/goal starts to be incompatible with/in disharmony with another motive/goal

<u>Conflict at Interpersonal level</u>: a process that begins when one person perceives that another has negatively affected or is about to negatively affect something that she desires

2) **Changes in perspectives regarding Conflicts:**

i) <u>The Traditional Viewpoint</u>: Conflicts of all kinds are bad, negative and harmful. It is associated with violence, destruction and irrationality. It disrupts the peaceful co-existence between people. This dysfunctional conflict outcomes are caused by:

a) Poor communication between individuals
b) Lack of trust and openness between individuals
c) Failure of one person to fulfill the demands and expectations of the another person
d) Unresolved issues/instincts/desires within an individual

ii)<u>The Interactionist Viewpoint</u>: Conflicts must be accepted and encouraged. It is a positive force, necessary for people to improve and grow. A minimum level of ongoing conflict keeps individuals introspective, creative, self-critical and energetic. Too much cohesiveness and harmony might make peoplenon-evaluative, lethargic and nonresponsive. This perspective categorizes conflicts as either Functional or Dysfunctional.
a) Functional Conflicts: it helps individuals to improve and experience personal growth
b) Dysfunctional Conflicts: it is destructive in nature, causes harm to individuals and builds up mistrust and disrespect among people

Whether a conflict will turn out to be Functional or Dysfunctional depends on twofactors: Type of conflict and the Level of conflict. Based on these there are three types of Conflicts:

<u>a</u>)Task Conflict: This conflict arises because of the type of work which people are doing.For this kind of Conflict to be functional, it must be kept between low to moderate levels. This will only happen when there is mutual trust among individuals and when an individual understands his and other's roles, duties and responsibilities.

b)Relationship Conflict: This conflict deals with interpersonal relationships. It should be maintained at lowest level. If its level rises it will become dysfunctional as it will cause hostilities, personality clashes and obstacles in goal achievement of people.

c)Process Conflict: This deals with how people should divide tasks and do their respective work. A low level of this conflict must be maintained. If it rises to a high level it will become dysfunctional for individuals.
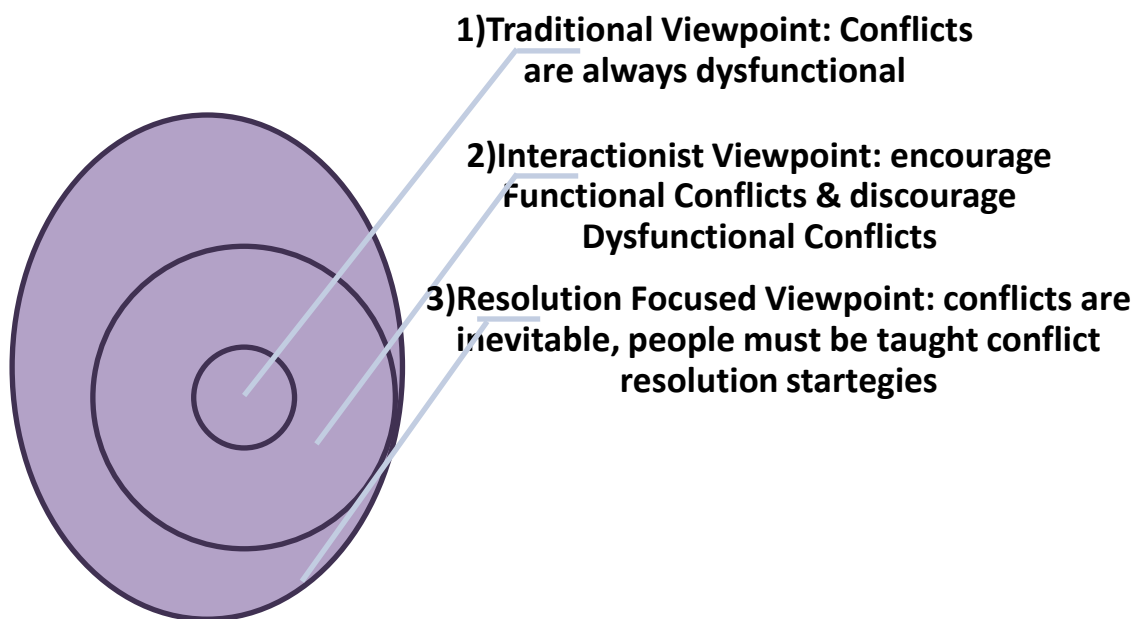
iii)The Resolution – Focused Viewpoint: This viewpoint regards conflict as inevitable. Its focus is on resolving all kind of conflicts productively and minimizing its negative and disruptive effects. This can be achieved by the following ways:

a)Developing an understanding among people aboutnature of conflicts and causes of conflicts

b)Helping people developing problem solving strategies to resolve conflicts

c)Develop greater sensitivity and an inclusive approach among people towards others

The changing perspectives regarding Conflicts can be illustrated as follows:

1)Traditional Viewpoint: Conflicts are always dysfunctional

2)Interactionist Viewpoint: encourage Functional Conflicts & discourage Dysfunctional Conflicts

3)Resolution Focused Viewpoint: conflicts are inevitable, people must be taught conflict resolution startegies

3) **The Conflict process:**

There are five stages along which Intrapersonal and Interpersonal conflicts arises:

a) Stage I: Potential Opposition: Certain conflict arising conditions must be present for conflict to arise. These conditions can be broadly categorized as follows:
   i) Communication:
      a) Semantic Barriers where same words have different meanings for different people
      b) Misunderstanding and mistrust between sender and receiver
      c) Use of certain technical terms (Jargons), which are not understood similarly by everyone
      d) Inadequate or filtered information being circulated
      e) Obstruction or noise in the communication channels
      f) Too much or too little communication between individuals

   ii) Size and Structural issues:
      a) As there is an increase in the number of people working in interdependent tasks, the potential of conflict increases
      b) Conflicts are more among young people, who have spent less time at work with each other
      c) When there are ambiguities relating to peoples roles, duties and responsibilities
      d) When benefits and resources can be given to limited number of individuals

   iii) Personality Characteristics:
      a) Higher conflicts are experienced by people who exhibit the traits of disagreeableness, neuroticism, authoritarianism, dogmatism, irritation and anger

b) Stage II: Cognition and Personalization: This stage involves perception of conflicts whereby people become aware that there are opposing interests/motives/goals. Further, people start personalizing the conflict i.e. reach the stage of 'felt conflict' where they start experiencing mistrust, anxiety, tension, frustration and hostility.
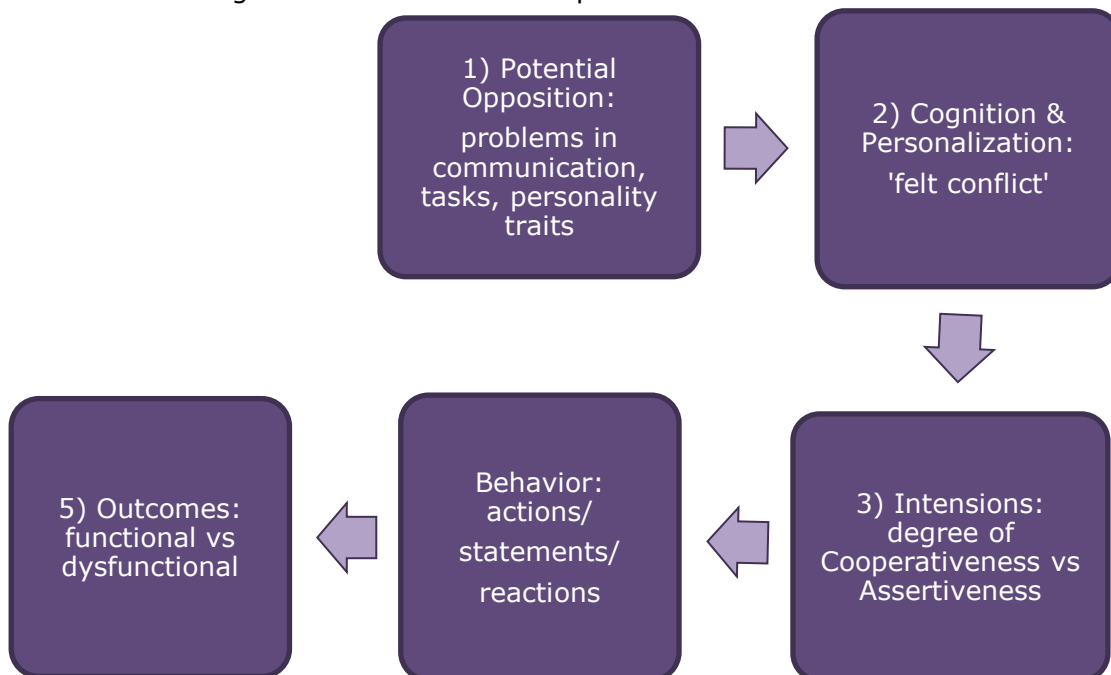
c) Stage III: Intensions:it involves decisions taken by people to act in a certain way due to conflicts with the other people. People vary along two dimensions- degree to which they are ready to Cooperate and the degree to which they want to Assert themselves. Even though the approach of people changes in different situations, they generally have an underlying disposition for one type of conflict handling strategy.
   Five conflict-handling intensions are:

   i) Compromising: it involves moderate levels of Cooperativeness and Assertiveness
   ii) Competing: it involves Assertive and Uncooperative approach
   iii) Avoiding: it involves Unassertive and Uncooperative approach
   iv) Accommodating: it involves Cooperative and Unassertive approach

    v)   <u>Collaborating</u>: it involves Assertive and Cooperative approach

d) <u>Stage IV: Behavior</u>: in this stage the conflict situation becomes visible vide the actions, statements and reactions of the conflicting persons.

e) <u>Stage V) Outcomes</u>: in this stage the consequences of the conflict becomes evident. It could be Functional outcomes or Dysfunctional outcomes.
   i)   <u>Functional outcomes are as follows</u>:
      a) The conflicting individuals get an opportunity to rethink, self-evaluate, self-introspect, innovate, project their ideas, thoughts and problems
      b) It offers platform for sharing of information, understanding about others viewpoints, become flexible and improve on the quality of decisions.
   ii)   <u>Dysfunctional outcomes are as follows</u>:
      a) Creates barriers in communication, builds discontent, misunderstanding and mistrust
      b) Reduces cohesiveness and cooperativeness
      c) Time, effort, energy and resources are diverted away from productive goals and directed towards conflict situation

The five stages of the Conflict process can be illustrated as follows:

1) Potential Opposition: problems in communication, tasks, personality traits → 2) Cognition & Personalization: 'felt conflict' → 3) Intensions: degree of Cooperativeness vs Assertiveness → Behavior: actions/ statements/ reactions → 5) Outcomes: functional vs dysfunctional

4) <u>The informal Conflict-management techniques</u>:

    i)   Develop Problem Solving strategies: in Interpersonal conflicts the best strategy is face-to-face meetings and open discussions. In Intrapersonal conflict situation, the individual can carry out self-introspection, self-evaluation and learn conflict resolving strategies

ii) Creating Superordinate tasks and goals: these tasks can be done and goals can be achieved only when the individuals who are conflicting with each other, share their resources and knowledge

iii) Expansion of resources and benefits: this will enable the individuals to get their share

iv) Avoidance: individuals can also take a conscious decision to withdraw from the conflict situation. This is used more by individuals who are in Cooperative cultures.

v) Smoothing: it involves highlighting common interests between conflicting people and downplaying their differences

vi) Compromise: each person gives up something that is important and of value to the other person

vii) People who enjoy greater authority take control of the situation and try to resolve conflicts between individuals

viii) Alter personal traits: people try to change their attitudes, feelings, behavior and thoughts

ix) Redesign tasks, rules, regulations, roles, duties and responsibilities of individuals

x) Make changes in the nature and amount of communication

xi) Introduce an outsider who is neutral towards both parties and is able to objectively assess the situation

5) **Negotiation as a Formal Conflict Resolving process:** Negotiation is a process in which two individuals/parties exchange goods or services and attempt to agree on the exchange rate for them. This kind of bargaining can take two forms:

i) Distributive Bargaining: the negotiation seeks to divide up a fixed amount of resources in such a way that it creates a win/lose situation. The two parties involved have opposing interests, share little information with each other, their relationship is short-term. Each party sets their Target point which they want to achieve and a Resistance Point – a lowest point which they will accept.

ii) Integrative Bargaining: the negotiation process assumes that there is more than one alternative or solution to a problem. It is possible to resolve it by creating a win/win situation. The focus here is on each other's interests, high amount of information is shared and the relationship between the two parties is long-term. Both parties are flexible, sensitive towards each other and are honest in their dealings.

6) **The Negotiation Process:**

i) Step 1: Preparation and Planning for the negotiation: it involves doing one's homework thoroughly regarding nature of and causal factors of conflict

ii) Step 2: Definition of ground rules for the negotiation: it involves setting up of the place, time, schedule and procedure of the negotiation process

iii) Step 3: Clarification and Justification: it involves the two parties providing necessary information and understanding to the other party regarding their perspective on various conflict arising issues.

iv) Step 4: Bargaining and Problem Solving: it is the actual stage of negotiation in which both parties make demands and concessions.

v) Step 5: Closure and Implementation: it is the final stage in which the two parties decide on monitoring and implementing a formal agreement.

The formal conflict resolving process involving Negotiations can be illustrated as follows

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┌────────────────────┐     ┌────────────────────┐     ┌────────────────────┐
│  i) Preparation &  │ →   │  ii) Definition of │ →   │ iii) Clarifications│
│      planning      │     │    ground rules    │     │    & Justifications│
└────────────────────┘     └────────────────────┘     └────────────────────┘

┌────────────────────┐     ┌────────────────────┐
│  iv) Bargaining &  │ →   │    v) Closure &    │
│  Problem Solving   │     │   implementation   │
└────────────────────┘     └────────────────────┘
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