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forumZFD

Principles of Local Conflict Counselling

A Handbook for Teaching and Further Education



Local Conflict Counselling

This project is co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.



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A Handbook for Teaching and Further Education

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Preface

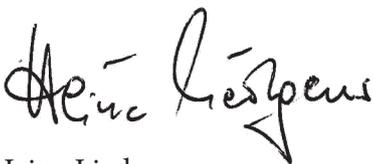
Societies are subject to constant change. The vicissitudes that go along with this change impact communal life in communities, districts, and cities, and can thus engender challenges, tensions, and conflicts. The first step to an active organisation of change is to see it as an opportunity.

The local conflict counselling approach offers answers to processes of change and transformation within urban and rural communities. Whatever current challenge arises – immigration, societal integration, social change, conflicts in the public sphere – the counselling processes support local decision makers in a participatory and sustained organisation of these changes.

ForumZFD created this handbook to provide teachers, practitioners, and everyone else who is interested with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the approach and the methods used in local conflict counselling, and to teach and study them. The handbook combines the relevant conceptual and methodical background with numerous practical examples and exercises, and with the inclusion of corresponding slides, allows for a comprehensive and varied learning experience.

ForumZFD possesses longstanding experience in the counselling of communities and introduces the approach to both academic teaching and research. The present handbook is the developed result of a cooperation with the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW) within the framework of the study programme Social Work. Local conflict counsellors brought their practical experience to the programme at the Cooperative University and learned from the constructive exchange with the students in return.

We are especially grateful to Sylvia Lustig, who developed this handbook based on her profound knowledge, her commitment and her experience as a lecturer at the University. We look forward to adding further modules to this set of tools in the near future, thus providing everyone interested in this approach with new tools of the trade for their work.



Heinz Liedgens
Chairman of the Supervisory Board forumZFD



Alexander Mauz
Chairman Programs and Qualification forumZFD

Preface

The present handbook is both conclusion and progress report. It constitutes the conclusion of a three-year project, which Sylvia Lustig conducted in my study programme “Child and Youth Welfare”, co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the European Union (AMIF) and the DHBW Heidenheim. The research project was undertaken in close cooperation with forumZFD. Sylvia Lustig’s dual function as my staff member on the one hand, and as a freelancer at forumZFD on the other, enabled the shortest possible decision-making processes in more than one situation.

These decision-making processes were aided with utmost constructiveness by Dr. Mirjam Folger, head of the research administration at DHBW Heidenheim. I am extremely grateful for the administrative support she provided, which went above and beyond what might be expected.

The handbook is also a progress report inasmuch as of course we could not expect, in the space of three years, to collect all pertinent experience, put all didactic considerations to the test in teaching, develop and audit a reliable curricular concept, and integrate it into a comprehensive programme.

Ultimately, the function of this handbook is first and foremost that of a recommendation, a helping hand. It is meant to help impart the multifaceted principles of local conflict counselling in academic teaching, in further education seminars in a concise form and as effectively as possible. Over the past three years, a few hundred students from the Faculty of Social Welfare profited from these intensive development efforts and actively contributed to them in the framework of their studies.

Like no other institution in the tertiary education sector, the Cooperative University is predestined for a close interlocking of teaching and occupational practice, because that is central to its idea. I am particularly pleased that the insights and findings, the ideas and concrete experiences of the project have also informed the layout and design of this book. Doubtlessly, this will increase the usefulness – and thus the use – of the book.

May the book and the ideas therein have an inspiring effect, and may they circulate widely!



Prof. Dr. Peter K. Warndorf
Director of the study programme Child and Youth Welfare,
Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University,
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Introduction

Slides 1 & 2

Wherever people live together, conflicts occur. It is neither possible nor desirable to avoid them altogether. They fulfil a vital role in the process of societal change. They accumulate when the composition of a society changes and people sort out what the points of reference for living together should henceforth be. In democratic countries, conflicts are seen at best as symptoms that indicate the need for an adjustment of official rules or guidelines, because everyday notions, values and problems have changed. The speed of social change and, accordingly, the necessary adaptive efforts may be increased due to exceptional social, ecological or political challenges, one of which may be a shift in the composition of society.

Local conflict counselling offers a suggestion for the treatment of contentious, conflict-ridden situations. It favours forms of conflict management that respect the needs of all involved parties and rejects forms that follow the idea that 'might makes right' or that help enforce the law of the jungle. It joins the catalogue of so-called alternative forms of conflict management, which are marked by negotiation and the effort to reach consensus. Even within our criminal law, this type of alternative procedure also complements the purely punitive measures, for example as atonement through victim-offender mediation¹ or other forms of restorative justice².

Local conflict counselling contributes to the establishment of sustainable structures of conflict management in administrative districts, municipalities and boroughs, as the people there learn to think and act in a conflict-sensitive and participatory manner – through the conduct they agreed upon with the counsellors. Moreover, they are being equipped with the competence to change the conflict's underlying structures.

Local conflict counselling was developed in order to harness the potential of civilian conflict management and conflict transformation³ for the social change that impacts German municipalities. Hereby the focus is on the constructive handling of challenging situations that might lead – or have already led – to disruption, dissatisfaction and violence in our communities.

The core attitude behind this approach is based on regard for human rights and thus on a fundamental respect for every human being – regardless of their ethnic or religious background or outward attributes such as race or sex/gender.

Local conflict counselling in postsecondary education

Since June 2015, forumZFD and Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW) have worked in cooperation. The goal is the dissemination, replicability and further development of the local conflict counselling approach.

¹ See Marks, Erich / Rössner, Dieter (1989, Eds.): Täter-Opfer-Ausgleich. Vom zwischenmenschlichen Weg zur Wiederherstellung des Rechtsfriedens. Bonn.

² See Trenczek, T. (2003): Mediation im Strafrecht; Zeitschrift für Konfliktmanagement 3/2003, p. 104 ff.

³ See Berndt, Hagen / Rieche, Bernd (2008): Zivile, gewaltfreie Konflikttransformation. in: Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (Eds.): Gewaltfrei streiten für einen gerechten Frieden.

Plädoyer für zivile Konflikttransformation. Oberursel, pp. 21-38 & Reimann, Cordula (2004): Assessing the State-of-the-Art in Conflict Transformation. In: Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation, Berghof Foundation, Berlin.

Introduction

Courses are offered by local conflict counsellors and so far, they involve the following modules or units:

- How to understand, analyse and manage conflicts
- The basic principles of local conflict counselling
- Benefit and impact of local conflict counselling
- Instruments and methods of local conflict counselling
- Conflict counselling in connection with migration and integration

Purpose and use of this handbook

This handbook is based on courses taught at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative University (DHBW) and it presents the contents in modules that can be combined variably. A variety of source material went into it, such as the teaching documentation, examples taken from actual forumZFD projects on local conflict counselling⁴, as well as the conceptual publications of Berndt and Lustig (2014 & 2016).

This handbook imparts a basic knowledge of the local conflict counselling approach and of its methods and tools. Theoretical knowledge in the relevant subjects (specialist fields) and practical experience with local conflict counselling are required for understanding the contents and applying them in courses. Hence, this handbook is explicitly not suitable for self-instruction with the aim of becoming a conflict counsellor.

Instead, we designed this handbook for counsellors who double as instructors; to provide qualified education and training in local conflict counselling, qualified both in theory and practice. Attendees of university courses and further education measures should be taught a basic knowledge of local conflict counselling. The contents herein described can help lay the foundation for a continuing qualification as conflict counsellor, as well as strengthen the ability to recognise the need for local conflict counselling in one's individual work environment, so people in the relevant positions are prepared to ask for support from providers of local conflict counselling. This handbook is thus a knowledge base geared at instructors working either in a university context or at institutions of further education and training.

Predominantly, this handbook will support you as a local conflict counsellor if, based on your background of practical work as a counsellor, you teach courses and want to apply your knowledge systematically. What you get here is a template for designing and teaching both online courses and attendance-based seminars in the field of local conflict counselling.

The individual teaching units or modules can be used as self-contained units, but they may also be expanded to encompass your own practical experience and knowledge.

⁴ <http://www.kommunale-konfliktberatung.org/de>

Introduction

The suggested order of the modules seems plausible today but should be adapted to the prior knowledge of the participants. Since local conflict counselling is a relatively young and dynamic field, and the need for it is being recognised by a large number of municipalities, an increase in practical projects may be expected in the coming years. To accommodate this development and stay abreast of changes, an expanded version of this handbook with **additional modules** is planned. Those modules could for example cover newly added subject areas and scientific findings. We also welcome constructive suggestions and proposals for further development of the handbook.

Organisation and materials

Each module begins with a brief overview of its contents. For each module, we formulated learning objectives with suitable key questions that can be used to check the participants' progress at the end of each unit. The contents of the modules are presented as continuous text.

In addition, each module features

- Exercises
- Didactic tips and hints with regards to content
- Reference to additional material in the appendix

The appendix contains subsidiary material

- Worksheets for selected exercises
- Presentations that can be used in class
- Recommendations for further reading

We use the following symbols:



The meeple (board game token) symbol indicates exercises for the participants.



The index finger highlights didactic hints for the lecturer.



The thought cloud symbolises tips with regards to content and background information for the lecturer.

1. Teaching and further education modules

Module A:

Basic principles of local conflict counselling

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling



Source: seminar at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW)

This first module is designed as an introduction to the topic, local conflict counselling (LCC). Here, the focus is on questions whose answers afford the students or participants with a rough overview of the subject matter. The first module is divided into the sections A1, “Basic principles of LCC” and A2, “Process of LCC”. Depending on the length of the planned course unit, the two sub-modules may be taught separately or at once.

Slide 3

Learning objectives:

The students know what local conflict counselling is:

- What are the elements of the local conflict counselling approach?
- What do we need local conflict counselling for?
- What are the benefits of local conflict counselling?

The students understand the prerequisites, basic assumptions, approaches and criteria for the success of local conflict counselling:

- What are the premises of local conflict counselling?
- What are the criteria for successful local conflict counselling?

The students get to know the typical process of local conflict counselling, plus several practical examples:

- Who is the addressee of local conflict counselling?
- What are the steps of the counselling process?
- What are the experiences with this approach to date?

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

A-1 Main features of local conflict counselling

Slide 4

The distinctive feature of local conflict counselling consists in leaving the responsibility for managing extant conflicts with the local actors, while providing them with support through the assignment of external counsellors for a finite period of time⁵.

The cooperation between counsellor and local actors is carried out on equal terms at all times.

Skills and competencies are employed for the benefit of everyone involved. Your task as counsellor is to put your knowledge and experience at the disposal of the local parties, so they in turn can act in a conflict-sensitive manner. During the entire process, as much responsibility as possible remains with the actors involved. As counsellor, you are responsible for the adequate organisation of this process, taking into account the specific circumstances and drawing on all the available local resources. In this way, a temporary intervention fosters the competence of the direct target group to deal with tensions in a constructive manner.

This approach can be applied in all phases of a conflict: both in existing and in incipient conflicts in a municipal framework, but also in the aftercare, as the case studies [starting on page 157](#) show. Depending on the escalation stage, different tools and measures are introduced to support the involved parties in their conflict management. Following the decision to call in an external counsellor, he or she analyses the respective conflict and the factors influencing it, together with the involved parties. As many involved actors as possible come together around one table to develop constructive potential solutions and sustainable, long-term strategies for dealing with the conflict.



Exercise 1: Associations with local conflict counselling

Depending on the size of the course, the introduction into the subject matter may encourage participation in the form of free association. To do this, prepare pictures that have a connection to local conflict counselling. The best idea is to glue these to the centre of large sheets of paper (at least A3). Distribute the sheets in the room and have the students form small groups and write down around the photos what connection they see between the scenes or subjects and local conflict counselling. This collection of ideas (brainstorming) serves as the basis for subsequent discussion.



In this exercise, you should make sure to involve the participants and their respective backgrounds and prior knowledge. Instead of a general collection of associations, you could also ask more specifically for their previous experience with similar forms of counselling or for connections to the subject matter of other lectures and courses they attend.

This exercise can be used at the beginning of the module, so you can always pick up on participant input and elaborate further. It can also be employed as a conclusion to the module, centring on the question: What is the participants' takeaway? What to them is unique or special about local conflict counselling?

⁵ Berndt, Hagen/ Lustig, Sylvia (2016): Kommunale Konfliktberatung – ein Beitrag zu Fragen des Umgangs mit Zuzug und der Integration. In: P.K. Warndorf: Integration - zwischen Konflikt und Prävention. Münster: MV-Wissenschaft, p.37.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

A-1.1 Local conflict counselling – additional benefit and specifics

Slide 5

Conflicts between individuals and groups arise as a consequence of social change. People with different ideas, opinions or interests clash; political decisions must be made. The positions appear incompatible at first – at least one group fears that their living conditions will be negatively affected as a result of the dispute. Political decisions at the federal or state level too have tangible consequences in the everyday lives of people in smaller governmental units. In concrete terms, those affected include public authorities and administrative bodies, the police force, associations and clubs, religious communities, companies, trade associations, individual citizens or immigrants. Even public administration personnel, teachers or policemen and -women, who may appear neutral at first glance, have their own vested interests and can be conflict parties. Hence, it is often difficult to find someone on site who is capable of acting with impartiality and is accepted by all parties involved in the conflict. Local conflict counsellors can assume this role for a limited time, counselling the local partners as they find their own possible solutions and implement those.

Thus, local conflict counselling can support the management of local conflicts on several different levels:

Short-term:	Counselling on short-term, urgent challenges and mediation/intervention in acute conflicts
Medium-term:	Counselling on short-term, urgent challenges and mediation/intervention in acute conflicts
Long-term:	Support and management of social integration of diverse groups, e.g. through the creation of new structures

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

A-1.2 What local conflict counselling does and doesn't offer

Slide 6

What local conflict counselling can achieve:

- Local conflict counselling brings together different actors with their respective viewpoints and interests.
- Local conflict counselling enables the actors to work out their own solutions instead of adopting pre-packaged approaches. This leads to a higher accuracy of fit and identification with the process steps.
- Local conflict counselling attempts, if possible, to engage all actors in the respective conflict, at least however the key actors. The more actors affected by the conflict commit to implementing necessary measures, the more sustainable the results of the process will be.
- Local conflict counselling makes conflicts visible. In some cases, the encounter or clash of the it puts the conflict on the agenda and thus, allows for its management. However, the conflict counsellor needs to always take the escalation dynamics into account and keep an eye on their potential consequences.
- Local conflict counselling offers process-oriented counselling. This supports the analysis of the conflict situation with its frequently diverse conflict lines, the development of transformation processes, as well as the creation of local structures that prevent further aggravation of the conflict and, more generally, the ability to handle conflicts constructively.

Slide 7

What local conflict counselling cannot achieve:

- quick standard solutions
- concrete measures of conflict management work done by the counsellors
- conflict avoidance
- guilty verdicts, placing blame

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling



Exercise 2:

Invite your students to change their perspective. The students are supposed to put themselves in the shoes of people enquiring about possible support from local conflict counsellors and formulate their wishes from this point of view. The primary objective here is to enter a discussion and arrive at a rough understanding of what local conflict counselling is and does.

The students are instructed to formulate concrete wishes, such as, for example:

“As mayor of city X, I wish for local conflict counselling to bring about a result that is conducive to my re-election.”

“As chairman of the Y-town football club, my wish is that the factory will not be built, so the sports field will survive.”

Single out individual wishes and scrutinise them with the lens of what local conflict counselling can and cannot achieve.

Which of the wishes would need to be formulated differently by the local conflict counselling team?

Which could the team fulfil, in accordance with the local conflict counselling approach?

Which of the wishes would the counselling team likely disavow and refer the enquirer elsewhere?

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

A-1.3 Basic premises of local conflict counselling

Slide 8

As a counsellor, you start from the following premises that local conflict counselling is based on⁶:

- **Ethical principles**

The basis for local conflict counselling is the commitment to and declared belief in democracy and human rights, by everyone involved. Enquiries that are not based on those are incompatible with local conflict counselling.

- **Gender sensitivity**

A gender-sensitive approach to work is an integral part of local conflict counselling. In a lot of conflicts, but also in conflict management processes, women and men are affected in different ways.

- **Conflict as opportunity**

Local conflict counselling is based on the assumption that conflicts are part of transformation processes and that they can be dealt with and managed. They do not only represent difficulties and logjams but also contain opportunities for reshaping the status quo.

- **Conflict sensitivity**

The conflict counsellor is aware of the interplay between their interventions and the local conflict happenings, as well as their possible influence on the dynamics of the conflict. As the process takes its course, the actors involved in the process are progressively trained to be conflict-sensitive.

- **Social life in towns and communities is malleable?**

Social conflicts are felt first in communal, local structures. At the same time, as a day-to-day environment the municipality offers a space where all actors involved can come together to deal with and manage the conflict. Municipalities and administrative districts can achieve an organisation of social life in such a way that problems and conflicts can be attenuated, minimised and solved constructively and non-violently.

⁶ For further details (in German) see: Berndt/ Hagen/ Lustig, Sylvia (2016), pp. 51-53.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

A-1.4 Criteria for successful local conflict counselling

Slides 9 & 10

For a successful counselling process, local conflict counselling is guided by the following criteria⁷:

- **Define realistic goals**
Whether the counselling process can be viewed as successful in the end rests on the formulation of realistic goals. They need to be defined jointly with the respective principals or clients at the beginning of each counselling process, to delimit this process in terms of both time and content.
- **A clearly defined counselling mandate**
In the beginning, you need to define what can be managed/achieved by the actors accessible within the counselling process. In case it becomes clear, either in the conflict analysis or during the counselling process, that factors outside the communal sphere are influencing the conflict, this may be incorporated in the findings.
- **Systemic approach**
Look at each conflict situation as a systemic fabric. Viewed with this mindset, conflicts do not arise from the misconduct of individual actors but from the interplay of many people, their actions and the structural framework. Your task is to get to the bottom of this interplay, so a constructive way of dealing with a challenging situation can be found.
- **Include and connect local resources**
Wherever local conflict counselling is employed, governmental and non-governmental structures and projects already exist, and they are suited – to various degrees – to dealing with the current challenges. Counselling also involves that you, together with the local partners, determine the available resources (personnel, finances, knowledge, networking structures, etc.) and involve these in the planned measures, to the highest possible effect.
- **Cooperation**
Local conflict counselling thrives on the active collaboration between counsellors, local partners and all groups involved in the conflict. Collaboration in this sense rests on commitment (or, as it is sometimes called, voluntary agreement), personal responsibility and co-operative negotiation.

⁷ For further details (in German) see: Berndt/ Hagen/ Lustig, Sylvia (2016), pp. 52-62.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

- **Consider the needs of the parties involved in the conflict**

For the practice of conflict management, local conflict counselling stresses the conscious (re-)building of the relationship between the parties involved in the conflict, taking into account both the power structure and the needs of the individual people involved.

- **Sustainability**

From the beginning, local conflict counselling aims towards long-term, sustainable solutions. Several vital factors contribute/are conducive to this:

- » No ready-made solutions, but process-oriented counselling that focuses on the conflict and its management (complemented by specialist counselling on topics relevant to the conflict as needed).
- » Accountability of the local actors: Local decision makers are agents and responsible partners in the counselling process. This means that in the decision-making processes encouraged by the counselling, they continue to take the lead in the communal fabric of the actors, even as they are working closely with and taking input from the counsellors. This also includes coming up with an adequate exit strategy for a planned and mutual ending of the counselling process.



Exercise 3: Compiling the core elements of local conflict counselling

You can have the participants work out what the premises of and/or criteria for successful local conflict counselling are. Form small groups. Each group gets one to three terms or concepts (such as “cooperation” or “counselling mandate”, for example), together with their elucidation. The participants then discuss why the respective concept is important in local conflict counselling. An example for a possible question would be: “What do we mean by cooperation in the context of local conflict counselling and how can that be implemented?” The results are then presented to the whole group. Establish consensus among the students as they discuss the concepts, making sure that, in the further course of the seminar, everyone will agree on what they stand for.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

A-1.5 Parties you will encounter locally

Slide 11

Counselling recipients and thus your clients may be:

- municipal administrations and authorities,
- employees in public institutions,
- multi-agency committees (prevention or integration committees),
- political parties on a local level,
- networks of authorities and civil society,
- associations such as organized religious communities or trade associations,
- active, involved citizens.

The counselling process may be initiated by different local individuals, authorities, institutions or committees. Here, **employees and staff of local administration and local politics are key actors**, due to their decision-making powers, their influence or leverage in the local community, their legitimation by the electorate, their function or connectedness within administration and politics, and their access to the resources of the local community⁸.

Direct counselling recipients benefit from the counselling service first-hand and are personally involved in the counselling process. We differentiate between **partners and actors**. Partners communicate closely with the conflict counsellor and assume vital responsibilities in conflict management. Actors are directly involved in the process of conflict counselling and are more often the ones affected by conflict management, or only responsible in sub-processes.

However, the positive effects of successful local conflict counselling usually have a reach that goes beyond the direct counselling recipients. Experience shows that **further individuals or groups** connected to the direct counselling recipients benefit from changes within the community, such as improved communication processes and more stable networking structures, even if they were not immediately involved in the counselling process. These people in turn are in contact and communicate with another set of people who possibly do not know about the process of local conflict counselling at all but can still feel a positive effect because of the changed situation. Those people might be the local citizens or volunteers, who may all benefit from the measures undertaken following counselling.

⁸ See Berndt/Lustig, 2016, p. 63.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

Slide 12

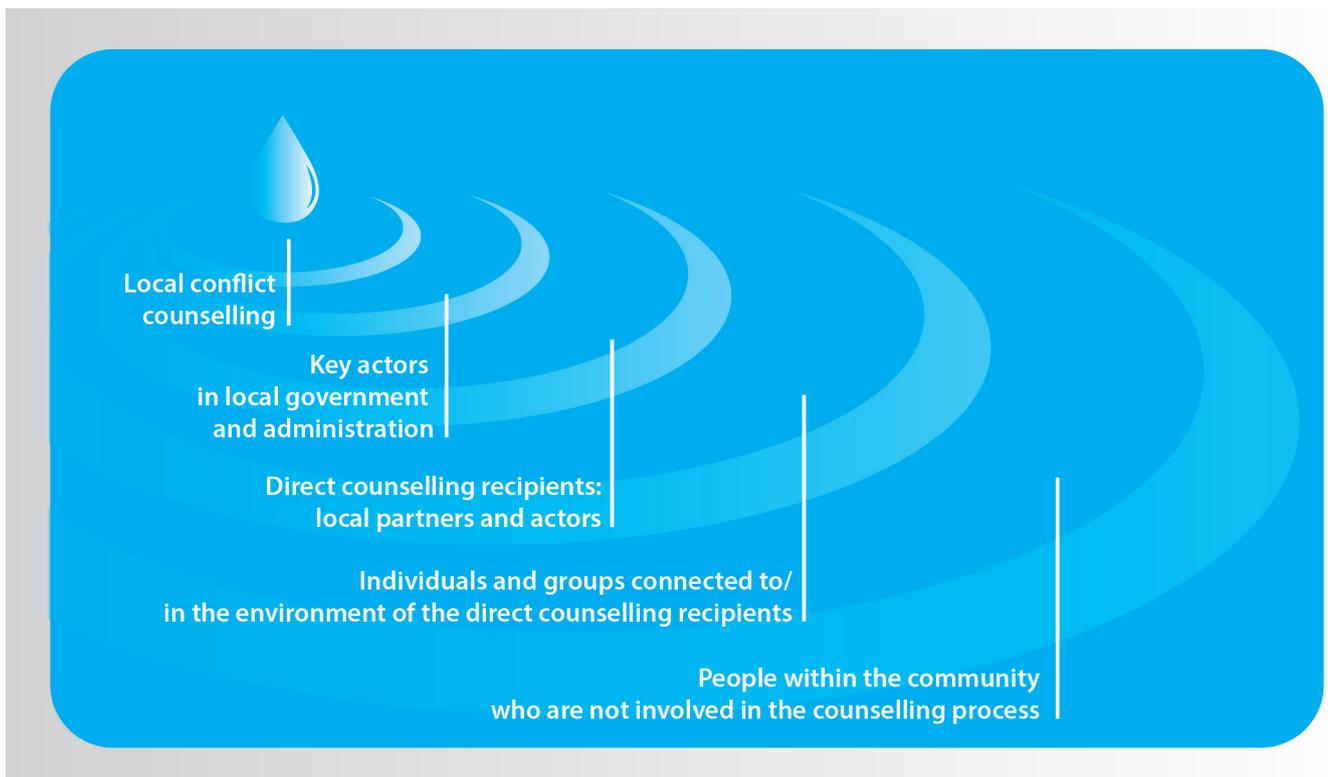


Figure 1: Parties affected by local conflict counselling, our representation

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

A-2 The process of local conflict counselling

A-2.1 Employment of local conflict counselling in the development of a conflict

Slide 13

Local conflict counselling can begin at different points in the development of a conflict.

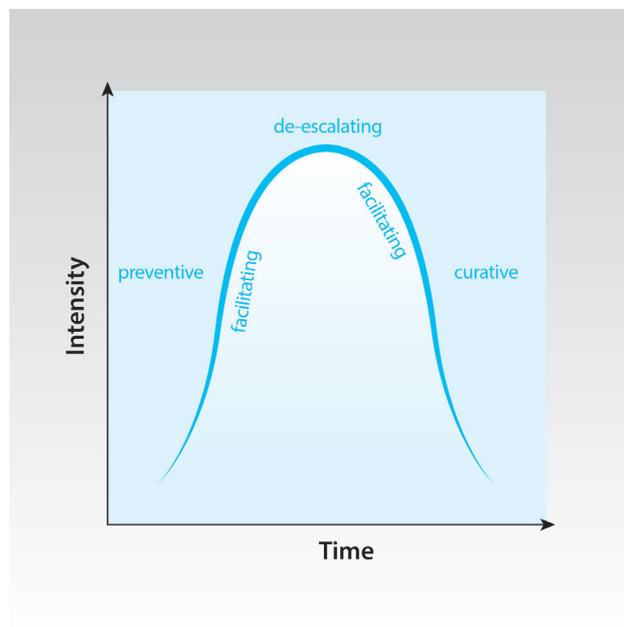


Figure 2: The Bächler curve, source: Bächler, G./Steinweg, R./Truger, A. 1996, quoted by Berndt, H./Lustig, S. 2016, p. 39.

Preventive: If it is applied preventively, its subject is not an already-escalated conflict, but rather tensions between different population groups or between population groups and authorities.

Case example: Potential for conflict exists in the fictitious city of *Donnenweil*, in the *Himmelreich* district (see *Case Study 1*, p. 158). Fundamental urban renewal has taken place in the *Himmelgasse*. The municipality's idea is to, through complete renovation, mix residents who are dependent on subsidised housing with flat owners. But the clash of different lifestyles and expectations leads to tensions in the neighbourhood.

The counselling team finds that potential for conflict lies primarily in a lack of spaces and opportunities for the different resident groups to meet. Initial preventive activities undertaken by the local actors aim at dissipating barriers between neighbours. Initial contact between the new residents occurs at a specially curated photo exhibition on the neighbourhood. Another measure to sustainably prevent the escalation of tensions within the quarter lies in increasing the staff. This ensures that further flanking measures can be introduced to accommodate the social mix that construction and renovation have achieved.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

Facilitating: Imbalances of power play an important part in the possibilities of managing conflicts. If for example one party involved in the conflict rarely appears in public, or does not appear at all, and does not have sufficient opportunity for participation in the public life of the majority society with its political structures, processes facilitated by the conflict counsellors may create an awareness of this imbalance, and thus of the conflict.

Case example: The federal state's central receiving point for asylum seekers allocates asylum seekers to the administrative district of Vorderheim . Most of them are single males from African countries. Other non-German people who already live in the same district include long-established former contract workers from Vietnam, Chinese students that come here through academic partnerships, as well as migrants from Southeast European EU countries.

The accommodation situation in Vorderheim (handled by a company on behalf of the district administration) especially was publicly criticised. Among other things, asylum seekers demand access to the partly locked toilets and are supported by several initiatives in this, in part groups from outside the district.

Support groups are formed for other population groups (e.g. "Fair Vorderheim" for equal rights for contract workers and asylum seekers), which are visible in public but not being equally heard.

Long-established citizens from socially or economically deprived population groups see themselves disadvantaged in comparison with the new citizens. Right-wing extremist groups discover mobilisation potential in this.

The conflict management mandate encompasses measures that are geared at making all groups involved in the conflict equally visible and audible, supporting their participation, and sensitise or alert the authorities to the concerns of all residents.

De-escalating: When local conflict counselling is to deal with an already-escalated conflict where direct violence has already occurred, its focus is on de-escalation or the prevention of further escalation respectively.

Case example: The urban society in the small town of Westmünsterrode (compare the detailed [Case Study 2 on page 163](#)) is divided into a majority society that is essentially petty bourgeois, and the residents of a socially deprived neighbourhood shaped by decades of in-migration, whence violence keeps breaking out. The police and the municipal government have therefore declared the neighbourhood a trouble hotspot; police have increased their operations . Publicly voiced opinions aggravate polarisation by blaming escalation and lack of safety on either the migrants or the police. The schism between the residents of the so-called trouble hotspot and the authorities is getting worse, while mutual distrust and fear rise.

The de-escalating conflict counselling encompasses establishing non-partisan contact with all involved groups, analysing the dynamics of the conflict and creating a steering committee tasked with developing constructive measures for easing tensions and improving the situation.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

Curative: Local conflict counselling can also take place as a follow-up after an acute conflict has already been transformed. The focus here lies on developing or strengthening structures that serve the long-term preservation of peaceful coexistence.

Case example: Following de-industrialisation, unemployment is high in the small town of Mollenheim. Moreover, immigration occurs on a scale unusual for a rural area. On top of that, there is a geographic separation of a quarter with a predominantly migrant population and the rest of town. This overall situation generated conflicts between the long-established population and groups of migrants repeatedly in the past. A conflict analysis was compiled, recommendations for action were formulated and led to decisions and measures that transformed the conflicts. Now a counsellor follows those up curatively, working to establish structures that facilitate the integration of migrants. In the counselling process, a strategic “steering committee for integration” and an office for the coordination of refugee issues were set up.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

A-2.2 The counselling cycle of local conflict counselling

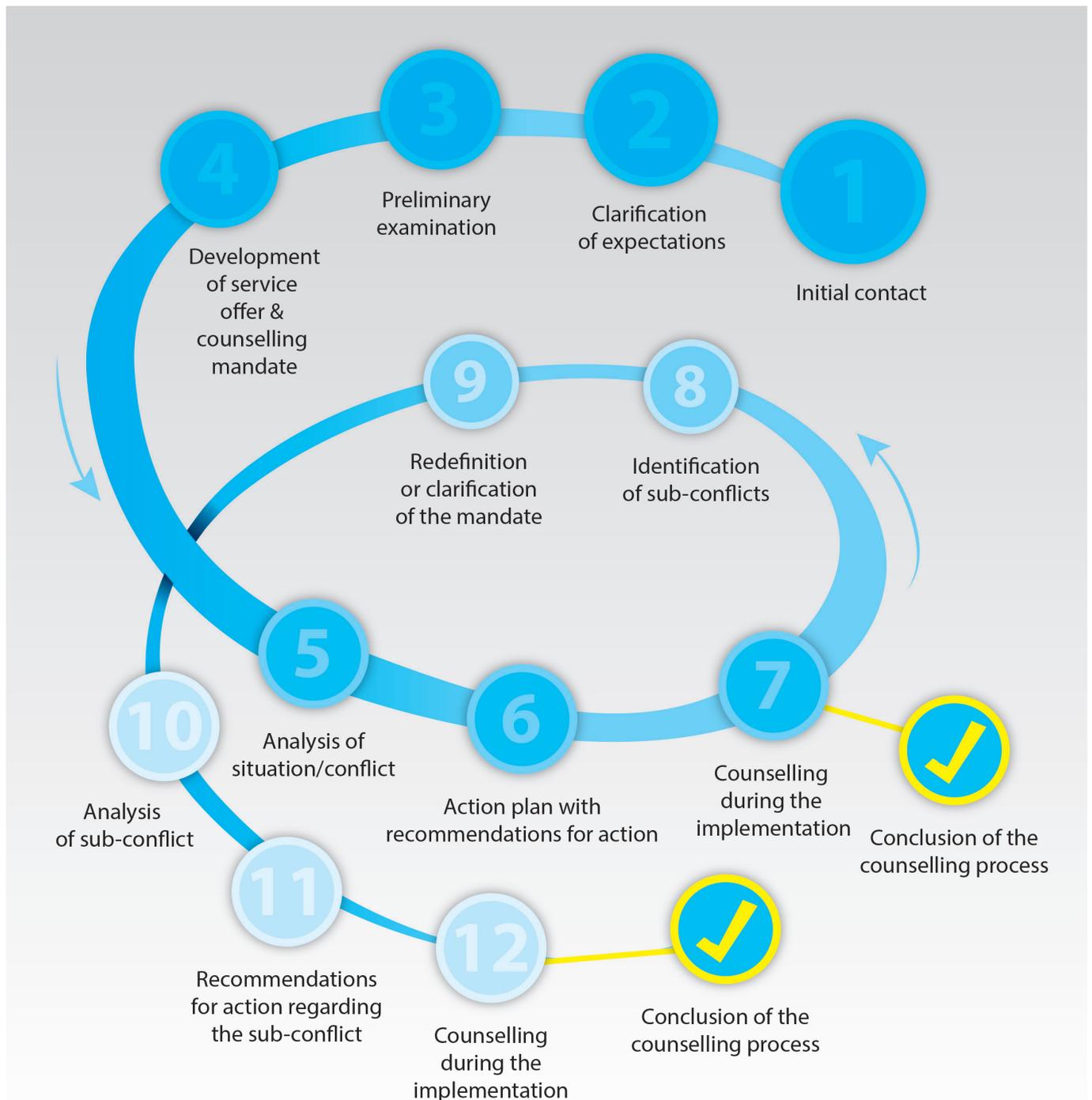


Figure 3: Phase model of local conflict counselling, source: Berndt,H./ Lustig,S. 2016, p 63.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

Slide 14

We divide the process of local conflict counselling into different phases, in which the conflict counsellors have different tasks. These will be found in each instance of counselling. The respective prioritisations and the combination of instruments are dependent on the concrete (conflict) situation, the locally available resources and the competencies of the counselling counsellor. In general, a variety of methods is used in local conflict counselling, and those methods may also be combined creatively.

The process of local conflict counselling is divided into three distinct phases:

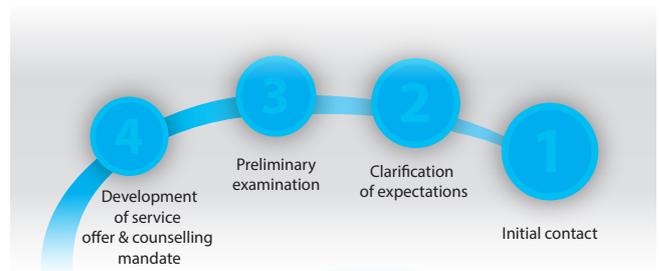
Phase I: Preparation of the counselling mandate

Phase II: Counselling process

Phase III: Conclusion of the counselling process

If necessary, the counselling process may be extended if an expansion, adjustment or alteration of the counsellor's mandate ensues.

In **phase I, “preparation of the counselling mandate”**, following the initial contact between conflict counsellor and representatives of the community/municipality, their expectations are clarified. Next, the conflict counsellors conduct a preliminary examination of the context of the conflict. It forms the basis for the assessment of object, scope, objectives and necessary local cooperation partners. At the conclusion of this preparatory phase, an offer is drafted, and a counselling mandate negotiated, which sets down the parameters for working together. Once the local authority has conferred the mandate, e.g. by entering into a cooperation agreement, the counselling process may be started.



Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

Phase II, the “counselling process”, consists of three central milestones :

1 Analysis of the situation and conflict:

Definition of the conflict, visualisation of the actors involved in it, the connections between them and the underlying processes.

2 Development of an action plan with recommendations based on point 1:

The conflict counsellor formulates and discusses the recommendations for action with the local actors in order to restore or obtain their ‘ownership’.⁹ This practice does not only secure the actors’ approval but it also clarifies that this is still their conflict, for whose management they take responsibility. This increases the likelihood of a successful implementation of the recommendations for action.

3 Counselling during the implementation of measures:

Conflict counsellors take an external position when they perform “counselling during the implementation of agreed-upon steps and goals”. In exceptional cases, the counsellor’s temporary participation in the implementation may become necessary for the process of conflict management, for example if a lack of local resources endangers the implementation of measures on a fundamental level.



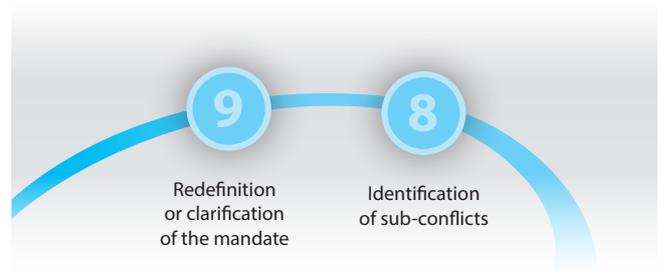
Monitoring progress during the implementation can be part of conflict counselling in different ways. Accordingly, there are many strategies for concluding a given counselling process. One essential prerequisite for the conclusion is that clients, or contracting authorities, and conflict counsellors come to the joint conclusion that the agreed-upon objectives have been achieved and the local actors can now continue their work without the need for further counselling. Then local conflict counselling may come to its “**conclusion**” in **phase III**. At this stage, the involved parties should declare whether counselling on further (sub-)conflicts is required, long-term support with less frequent counselling sessions is sought, or no further contact is deemed necessary.



⁹ Christie, Nils 1977: Conflicts as property. In: British Journal of Criminology 1977/ 17, (1): pp. 1- 15.

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

In case a mandate for an extension of conflict counselling is conferred, further counselling steps similar to phases I and II follow, but with a new counselling focus: the new mandate is jointly defined, naming and defining the sub-conflict to be considered.



Analogous to the management steps taken in the first mandate, further cooperation again proceeds by analysing the sub-conflict (or situation that is deemed problematic), jointly developing recommendations for action, and counselling during the implementation, before once again deciding on the conclusion or continuation of local conflict counselling.



Exercise 4: Local conflict counselling in practice

Divide participants into two groups and give them one of the case studies/examples each. Guiding questions are:

- Which of the phases of local conflict counselling you can identify clearly?
- What aspects of the counselling that took place here make you doubt whether this has actually been local conflict counselling?
- In these cases, what was not local conflict counselling but still useful or helpful?

Appendix for Module A: Presentations and Exercise Sheets

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Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

Contents

Module A: Basic principles of local conflict counselling

A-1 Main features of local conflict counselling

- A-1.1 Local conflict counselling – additional benefit and specifics
- A-1.2 What local conflict counselling does and doesn't offer
- A-1.3 Basic premises of local conflict counselling
- A-1.4 Criteria for successful local conflict counselling
- A-1.5 Parties you will encounter

A-2 The process of local conflict counselling

- A-2.1 Employment of local conflict counselling in the development of a conflict
- A-2.2 The counselling cycle of local conflict counselling

Learning objectives

- You know what local conflict counselling is.
- You understand the prerequisites, basic assumptions, approaches and criteria for the success of local conflict counselling.
- You become familiar with the typical process of local conflict counselling.

Main features of local conflict counselling

- Responsibility for conflict management remains with the parties involved in the conflict
- Support through counselling for a finite, agreed-upon period of time
- Cooperation between local partners and counselling team on equal footing
- Promoting the conflict management competency of the local actors
- Applicability in incipient and existing conflicts, as well as in the aftercare
- Participation in the development of conflict management strategies by as many affected parties as possible



Management of local conflicts on different levels:

- Short-term: Counselling on short-term, urgent challenges and mediation/intervention in acute conflicts, e.g. accommodation of migrants
- Medium-term: Management of social change, dealing with fears and violence
- Long-term: Support and management of social integration of diverse groups, e.g. through the creation of new structures

What local conflict counselling can achieve:

- It brings together different actors and their respective viewpoints.
- It enables actors to work out their own, suitable solutions.
- It makes conflicts visible.
- It offers process-oriented counselling, which creates local structures to prevent further aggravation of the conflict and fosters the ability to handle conflicts constructively.



What local conflict counselling cannot achieve:

- Quick standard solutions
- Implementation of conflict management by the counsellors
- Conflict prevention
- Guilty verdicts, placing blame

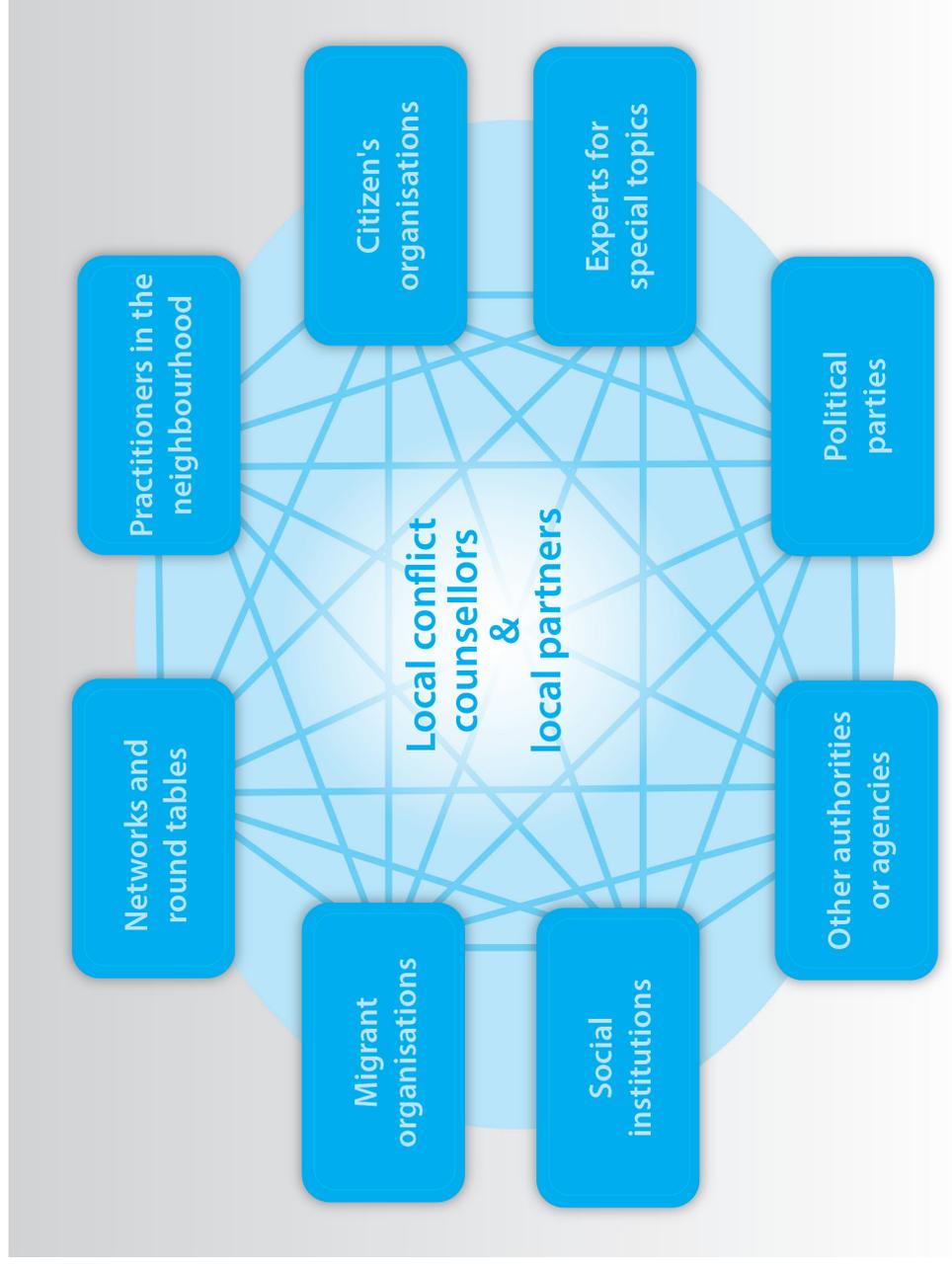
Basic premises of local conflict counselling

- Commitment to democracy and human rights
- Gender-sensitive approach to work
- Conflicts contain opportunities as part of transformation processes
- Conflict sensitivity is part of the development
- Social life in local communities is malleable and manageable

Criteria for success

- Define realistic goals
- A clearly defined counselling mandate
- Systemic approach
- Include and connect local resources
- Active collaboration between counselling team and local actors
- Consider the needs of the parties involved in the conflict
- Aim towards long-term, sustainable solutions

Cooperation



Source: Berndt, H./ Lustig, S. (2016), p.62

Potential counselling recipients

- municipal administrations and authorities
- employees in public institutions
- multi-agency committees (prevention or integration committees)
- political parties on a local level
- networks of authorities and civil society
- associations such as organised religious communities or trade associations
- active, involved citizens

Recipients of local conflict counselling

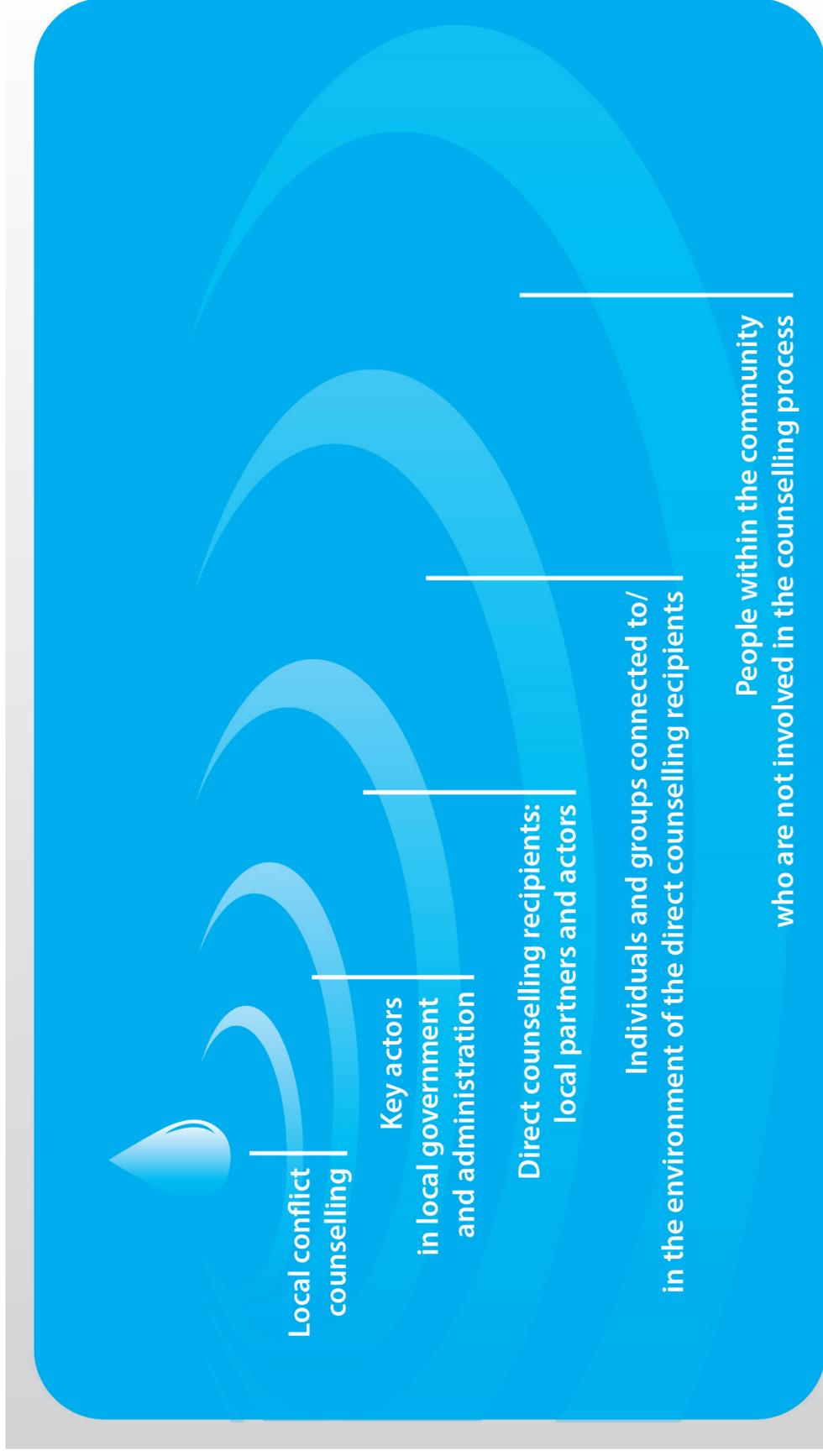
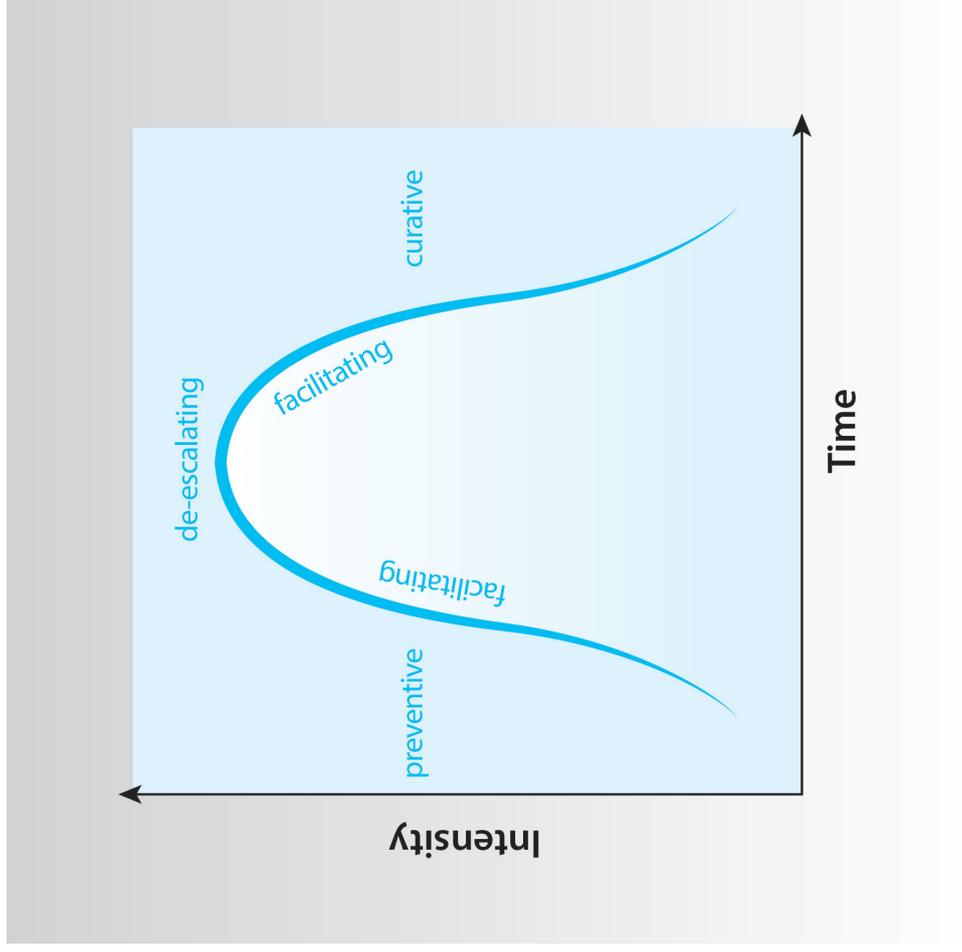


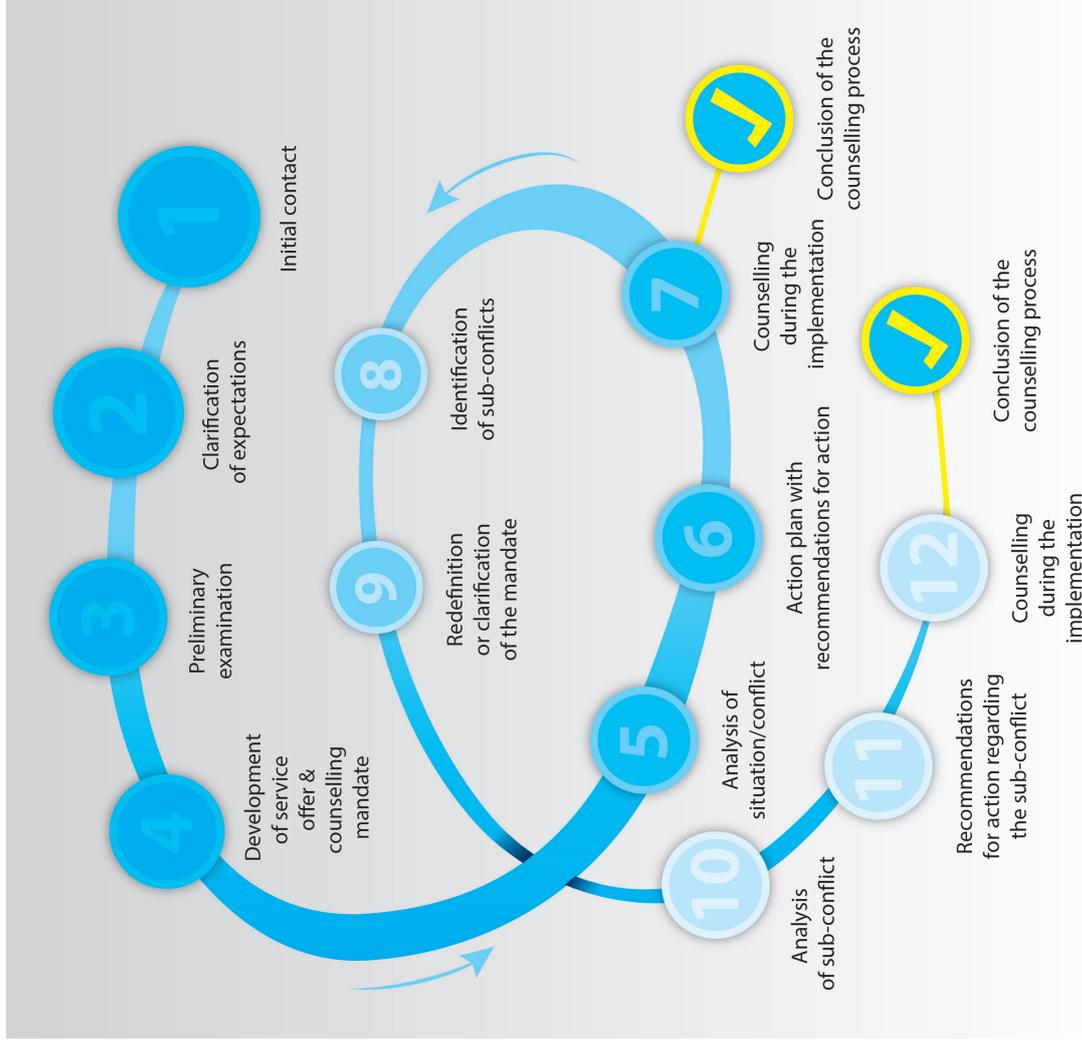
Figure: Parties affected by local conflict counselling, source: our representation

Local conflict as the object of local conflict counselling



Source: Bächler, G./Steinweg, R./Truger, A. (1996) quoted after Berndt, H./Lustig, S. (2016), p. 39

Counselling cycle



Source: Berndt, H./Lustig, S. (2016), p. 63.



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Module A: Exercise Sheets



Exercise for A-2.2

Consultation cycle of local conflict counselling

Local conflict counselling in practice

Form groups of 5-6 people.

Read the case study at hand.

Discuss the following questions as a group:

1. What phases of local conflict counselling can you distinguish clearly?
2. For which aspects of counselling do you have doubts as to whether this actually constitutes local conflict counselling?
3. What in the case study was not local conflict counselling, but was still helpful?

Develop a presentation of key insights and present them in plenary.

Plan for the presentation to take 5 to 10 Minutes.

1. Teaching and further education modules

Module B:

Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

Slides 1 & 2

The first part of module B offers material for an elementary understanding of conflicts and conflict dynamics that are relevant for local conflict counselling.

The second part of the module centres on the systemic approach to analysing conflicts as a central element of local conflict counselling. On the one hand, you will find explanatory notes on selected fundamentals of the systemic approach. On the other hand, we introduce selected tools of systemic conflict analysis, as they are applied in local conflict counselling. The basic principles of systemic thinking and acting are not described here however, since they are widely available in the published literature.

Slide 3

Learning objectives:

Participants are able to define "conflict" and have formed an understanding of the concept:

- What is a conflict?
- What definitions of conflict exist?

They are able to differentiate between conflict and other terms and concepts:

- What is the difference between "conflict" and the terms "problem", "escalation", "violence", "war"?

Participants have gained an understanding of the vital elements of conflict dynamics.

They understand the process of conflict escalation:

- What are the escalation dynamics a conflict typically follows?
- Which possible intervention measures are suitable for which stage?

Participants understand that in democratic societies, conflicts are an expression of social change.

- In what ways does a conflict not just pose a danger but also an opportunity?
- What does local conflict counselling do in a conflict, what doesn't it do?

Participants understand which methods of conflict analysis are employed when and to what end:

- How do I analyse the actor relationships in a conflict?
- How do I get a grasp of the positions, interests and needs of the different actors involved?
- How do I visualize relationships and connections in a conflict?

Participants are able to apply selected instruments of systemic conflict analysis to concrete examples from their work and private life.

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

B-1 Conflict: Term and meaning

B-1.1 The term conflict

Conflict is a term that has a specific meaning in our everyday understanding. This meaning and the attendant associations/ connotations vary.



Exercise 5: Brainstorming on the term “conflict”

Have participants collect terms associated with the word “conflict”, either in small groups or in plenary. Have moderation cards ready; three different colours are useful, such as red—yellow—green. Ask the students to name words they associate with the word “conflict”. Do not comment or rate the terms, but simply write them down on cards: negatively connoted ones on red cards (war, violence, fight, escalation ...), neutral ones on yellow cards (contract, conflicting parties ...) and positively connoted words on green cards (mediator, settlement, opportunity, understanding ...). Then pin the cards on the wall/board, sorted by colour. Without forestalling what the group has to say, let the visible impression speak for itself.



Likely most cards will be red, which in turn makes it easy for you to convey that it isn't easy to understand a conflict as something constructive, clarifying – least of all for those directly involved in it. Later, when it comes to working with case studies, you can come back to this board image to remind the students why parties involved in a conflict might resist attempts at conflict management.



In sociologist action theory, the term “social interaction” means, “the two-way relationships between individuals and groups expressed through communication (language, symbols, gestures etc.) and the resulting two-way influence on their attitudes, expectations and actions” (Fuchs et al. 1978, p.352f).

Slide 4

Definition of social conflict:

There are many definitions of “conflict”. Friedrich Glasl offers a common one that is useful for local conflict counselling:

“Social conflict is an interaction between actors (individuals, groups, organisations etc.), wherein at least one actor experiences disparities or incompatibilities in perception and imagination, in feeling and wanting with the other actor (or actors) in such a way that a realisation of what the actor thinks, feels or wants is impaired by another actor (or actors)”¹⁰.

¹⁰ Glasl, F. (2010), p. 24, our translation.

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

In other words: Social conflicts are the object of local conflict counselling. Those are conflicts that arise between individuals or groups if at least one of the people involved feels constrained by the other party involved in the conflict.

In sociologist action theory, the term “social interaction” means, “the two-way relationships between individuals and groups expressed through communication (language, symbols, gestures etc.) and the resulting two-way influence on their attitudes, expectations and actions”¹¹.

A simple formula for describing a conflict

To describe a conflict in a simplified way, we recommend using the following formula as a blueprint: “Conflict between actors A and B (and C, D ... where applicable) about subject S at point in time T”.

The subject of the conflict is at the centre of the description. Parties involved in the conflict tend to call it the content or substance of the conflict. It is formulated in concrete and precise terms. Even if factual issues play a less important role in conflict management than the underlying relationship issues, it is helpful to initially designate the factual content as the subject of the conflict.

Example:

The conflict is between the municipal council and the volunteer members of the work group on migration (actors) about “the ways in which cleanliness and quiet in the surroundings of the refugee accommodation can be ensured at this point in time” (subject of the conflict).



Exercise 6:

In plenary or, if your group is large, in teams of up to five persons, collect several formulaic descriptions of conflicts that the students are familiar with from university life or politics, e.g. “conflict between union and employer representatives about the amount of wages”.

¹¹ Fuchs et al. 1978, p.352f

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

Slide 5

PPP triangle: The three sides of a conflict

For constructive conflict counselling, it is helpful to be able to direct your gaze to different aspects of the conflict. This presupposes an awareness of where your focus is directed.

The PPP triangle labels three essential viewpoints, with whose help we can expand our awareness of what is actually happening in the conflict. It focuses the attention on the way a person speaks about the conflict, or the way you as a counsellor think, speak and write about the conflict, respectively. Frequently, the onus is on just one 'P', two at most. In order to consider the dynamics of a conflict in a comprehensive manner, the PPP triangle calls to mind all three 'Ps': Person, Process, Problem.

If you look at the **persons** that are involved in the conflict, you determine who is involved in what role or function and with what concern or objective.

If you look at the **problem** involved in the conflict, you end up with factual information and gain knowledge of the underlying conditions or available resources.

If you focus on the **process**, you find out more about the development of the conflict, the dynamics of it and relationships in flux.

Those involved in the conflict, but also observers or counsellors, often only talk about one side of the conflict. For the counsellors, knowing about and staying aware of the three sides serves to expand their own point of view, asking specific questions to direct the attention of the counselling recipients towards the other two sides, and thus get additional information. If for example someone states, "This is a religious conflict!", a counsellor can ask: "How did it start? What dynamics were/are in play? Who else is involved, and what are the interests and needs of the respective actors?"

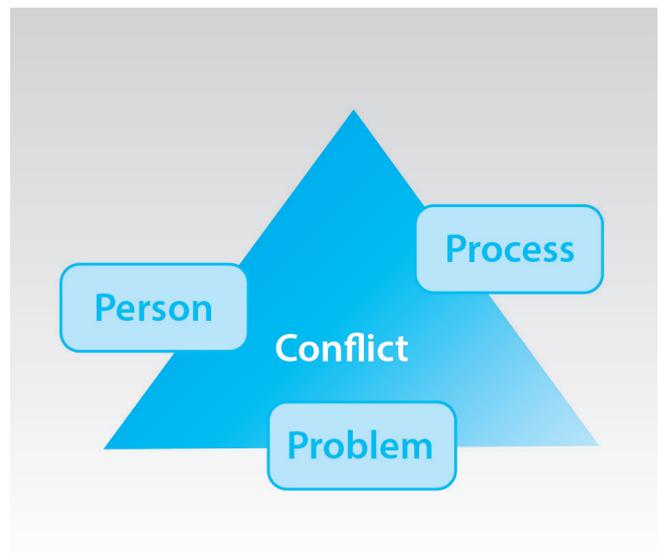


Figure 4: The PPP triangle – three sides of a conflict, source unknown.

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

B-1.2 Differentiation between conflict and other terms

In your work as a local conflict counsellor, you will frequently be confronted with a mixing, a confusion of terms. Therefore, the definition (B-1.1), clarification and differentiation of the term “conflict” seems to be an essential basis for successful communication. The terms “problem”, “violence” and “escalation” will often occur. When counsellors talk about “peace”, they also often refer to “war” as its opposite.

Slide 6

„Problem“

Every conflict is based on one or more problems but conversely, not all problems will turn into conflicts. For a problem to become a conflict, what is added is the perception that an impairment of one's own actions/conduct by at least one other person exists.

Example:

- **Problem:** The door of the lecture hall is locked. Students and professor want to get in but can't.
- **Konflikt:** Student X had gotten the key from the professor but lost it. If the professor cannot start her lecture on time the way she planned, and if she places the blame or the responsibility for this on the student, the problem becomes a conflict between the two of them.

Slide 7

„Escalation“

In the context of conflict management, an escalation describes an intensification of a conflict, which is started by specific actions or reactions on the part of the involved parties.

Example:

If the student brings in some fellow students, who loudly support him as he professes his innocence, or if the professor brings in the relevant chair as her coalition partner, and he points out that the student will have to pay for replacing the locking system, these things contribute to the escalation of the conflict.

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

Slide 8

„Violence“

Depending on the scale of escalation, it is possible that one or both actors resort to violence to advance their interests. Not all conflicts are violent however.

The concept of violence, according to Johan Galtung: In the social sciences, especially in the research on peace and conflict, for the last forty years the discussion has been shaped strongly by the Johan Galtung's concept of violence. Johan Galtung introduced the differentiation between direct and structural violence in the late 1960s and expanded the discussion in the early 1990s by adding the term "cultural violence".

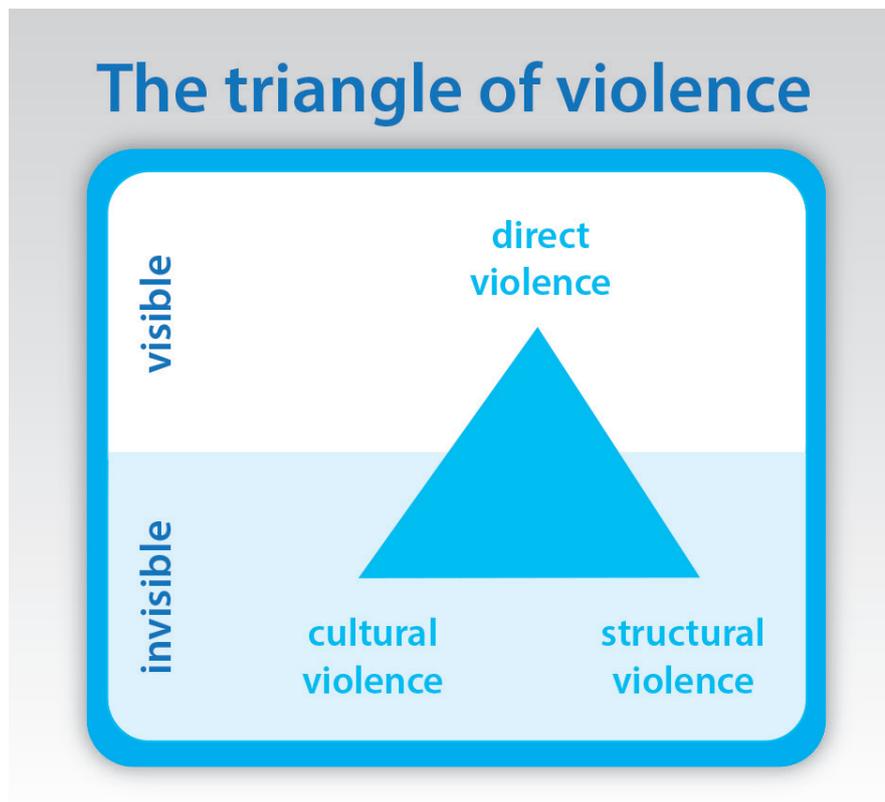


Fig 5: The triangle of violence, source: our representation, based on Galtung

According to Galtung, there is a direct connection between direct, structural and cultural forms of violence: "Direct violence, whether physical or/and verbal, is visible. Human action does not emerge in a void however; it has its roots somewhere. Two of those we want to hint at: a culture based on violence [...] and a structure that is violent in itself, by being repressive and exploitative."¹²

¹² Galtung, J. (1990), p. 291 ff.

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Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

Slide 9

(a) Direct violence

Direct (personal) violence means “purely physical harm or an attack on life and limb [...] (with killing as its most extreme form) – a subjective act that intends this as a consequence”¹³. Direct violence occurs “if there is a sender, an actor that intends the consequences of this violence”¹⁴.

Example:

If the assignment of blame in the example above is accompanied by threats, we can already speak of direct violence, as that entails the possibility of an escalation that involves physical violence.

Slide 10

(b) Structural violence

According to Galtung, structural violence¹⁵ is everything that hampers/impairs self-fulfilment, personal growth or the fulfilment of human needs. It is “built into the system and manifests itself in an unequal balance of power [...], unequal opportunities in life”. In the case of structural violence, “there is nobody who emerges to directly harm somebody else”¹⁶. Neither the existence of structures of this sort nor their ramifications are obvious to the individual. “We can thus speak of structural violence any time social systems are organised in such a way that unequal opportunities in life and crass differences in positions of power, with their attendant opportunities for influence, become the social principle of existence”¹⁷.

Example:

The significance of structural violence becomes clear when we look at the consequences of a globalised economy. The people triggering or causing violence (whom we call perpetrators) and the people experiencing violence (so-called victims) are no longer individually identifiable. Due to the coffee consumption in Europe, structural violence is the reason for the impairment of the living conditions of people in the countries of production, if for example the wages of the rural labourers on coffee plantations are so low that they cannot fulfil their basic needs, i.e. food, clean water and safe housing. The coffee consumers are not directly connected to the labourers, only indirectly through economic and political structures: The cup of coffee we are currently drinking may be the reason that the child of a rural labourer dies of diarrhoea because of contaminated water. This particular pound of coffee could only be sold cheaply due to unfair production conditions. But we cannot retrace the steps and find this out.

¹³ Galtung, J. (1975b), p. 9.

¹⁴ Galtung, J. (2001), p. 16.

¹⁵ Galtung, J. (1975a), p. 8.

¹⁶ Galtung, J. (1975b), p. 12

¹⁷ Ferdowski, Mir A. (1981), p. 114.

Module B:

Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

Slide 11

(c) Cultural violence

“We take cultural violence to mean those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our world, – think of religion and ideology, language and art, the empirical and formal sciences (logic, mathematics) – which may be used to justify direct or structural violence”¹⁸. This form of violence does not kill or maim anyone, but it contributes to justification¹⁹.

Example:

A typical example of cultural violence is the ideology of the extreme right, which posits an inequality of people qua race, whose most extreme form is represented in the theory of a “master race”. Its proponents legitimise discrimination, persecution or killing human beings based on arbitrarily-defined criteria such as skin or eye colour.



Exercise 7: Forms of violence

Discuss with the participants what topical examples of direct, cultural and structural violence they can think of. In what ways do the three types of violence entail or influence each other?

Possible answers: Oppression in the form of structural violence can lead to (physically) violent insurrections. Discrimination against and persecution of ethnic minorities in terms of cultural violence can include or result in physical harm (e.g. physical violence and disproportionately frequent arrest of African Americans in the US, or disproportionately frequent stop-and-search of ‘Arabian-looking’ men in Germany).

¹⁸ Galtung, J. (1998), p.341

¹⁹ Cf. Galtung, J. (1990), p. 291 ff.

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

Slide 12

„War“

Since Carl von Clausewitz (On War, 1832) famously described war as the “continuation of politics by different means”,²⁰ the concept and term have evolved. A common contemporary definition is offered by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kriegsursachenforschung*, a consortium for research on the causes of war. Following the Hungarian peace researcher István Kende (1917-1988) the AKUF defines “war as a violent mass conflict that exhibits all the following characteristics:

- (a) two or more armed forces are involved in the fighting, with regular forces of the government on at least one side (military, paramilitary units, police units);
- (b) there needs to be a minimum of centrally controlled organisation of the warring parties and the battles on both sides, even if that does not mean anything more than organised armed defence or planned attacks (guerrilla operations, partisan war etc.);
- (c) the armed operations ensue with a measure of consistency, not merely as occasional, spontaneous clashes, i.e. both sides operate based on an orderly strategy, regardless of whether the fighting takes place on the territory of one or more societies and how long they last.”²¹



Due to its topicality and presence in the media, it is likely that this topic will be met with great interest, and participants want to delve in more deeply. However, that leads the discussion away from the term “conflict”. We recommend that as the educator, you point them to relevant literature and possibilities for further education or else prepare and guide the digression into the topic of war.²²

²⁰ Von Clausewitz, Carl 1832, Book 1, Chapter 1, Sub-chapter 2

²¹ <https://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/fachbereich-sowi/professuren/jakobeit/forschung/akuf/kriegsdefinition.html>, accessed 18 Dec. 2017

²² E.g. <http://sicherheitspolitik.bpb.de/krieg-und-gewaltkonflikte/hintergrundtexte-m1/kriegsdefinitionen-und-konflikttypologien>, accessed 18 Dec. 2017

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

B-1.3 Conflict as an engine of social change

Slide 13

In local conflict counselling, counsellors always start from the following assumption: Social conflicts in democratic societies may be viewed as normal, because they are an expression of social change and its attendant transformation processes. A conflict always simultaneously posits an opportunity and a danger: the chance to adequately develop the norms and values of the people caught up in the negotiation process; but a danger for the stability of the social fabric. In the end, it is the way conflicts are handled that decides whether they escalate and lead to fear, victimisation, use of violence or war, or whether they open new possibilities of coexistence and cooperation for everyone involved.

Each of us has experienced and survived a sizeable number of conflicts and thereby developed a certain degree of competence in dealing with them. Conflicts often force us to leave our comfort zone however and may overwhelm us.

The purpose of local conflict counselling is not to deliver possible solutions in the sense of ready-made answers and 'recipes'. Rather, it involves local actors and reflects on what a process might look like that is most likely to lead them to find a suitable form of management and, in the best-case scenario, to constructively transform the conflict. To achieve that, it is vital that the needs of all involved parties are identified and taken into consideration, something that becomes especially clear in the case examples in general ([pages 158ff](#)), and particularly in the [case study you find on page 163](#).



Exercise 8:

Reflection of one's own experience with conflicts as both opportunity and danger

Task participants with thinking about their own experience with conflict situations so far. Each participant chooses one conflict situation from their own experience that featured some sort of (more or less conscious) conflict management. Then let them work in small groups and tell each other about the respective situations. The following questions should be answered in the process:

- The conflict arose between whom and what about?
- To what extent did you experience the conflict as an opportunity at the time, and to what extent as a danger?
- What was helpful for a constructive management of the conflict?
- Was the conflict management followed by changes in behaviour, norms or rules of those involved?



When you do this exercise, take the level of familiarity within the group into account. Allow the students to assemble/form their group autonomously. For the plenary, choose an activating form that ensures voluntariness: Ask the groups for example to present one example each, without revealing the conflict owner.

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B-1.4 Categorisations of conflicts

To be able to adequately manage a conflict, it is helpful to first assess it according to a set of fixed criteria. To assess conflicts in this way, we use categorisations that lay the focus on different angles. Common categorisations that are also used supportively in local conflict counselling include the assessment of social complexity and the classification into escalation stages.

Categorisation according to the level of social complexity

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As indicated above. One possible categorisation of conflicts is made according to their social complexity. The decisive factor here is the number of actors involved in the conflict. The range encompasses everything from individual conflicts to collective conflicts.

Intra-personal conflicts are conflicts within an individual. Management takes place through supervision, therapy, advice from friends and colleagues etc.

Social conflicts are conflicts that involve two or more individuals, groups or organisations. Local conflict counselling deals exclusively with social conflicts.

Social conflicts can be divided into:

Inter-personal conflicts:	conflicts between two or more people about an object or issue;
Intra-group conflicts:	conflicts within a group (several people who appear or behave as a unit, e.g. sharing an opinion or position), whereby group dynamics begin to play a bigger role;
Inter-group conflicts:	conflicts between groups, e.g. different political parties, unions or employer representatives. Collective identities exert considerable influence on the dynamics in inter-group conflicts.
International conflicts:	intergovernmental and transnational conflicts that also involve non-governmental actors (e.g. between governments and freedom fighters).

Local conflict counselling deals with intra- and inter-group conflicts. The focus is on inter-group conflicts, since in a democratic, municipal context, the negotiation of rules usually takes place between group representatives or groups, not between individuals. In most cases however, all aforementioned conflict levels can be found in this conflict category. They need to be recognised and considered within conflict management.

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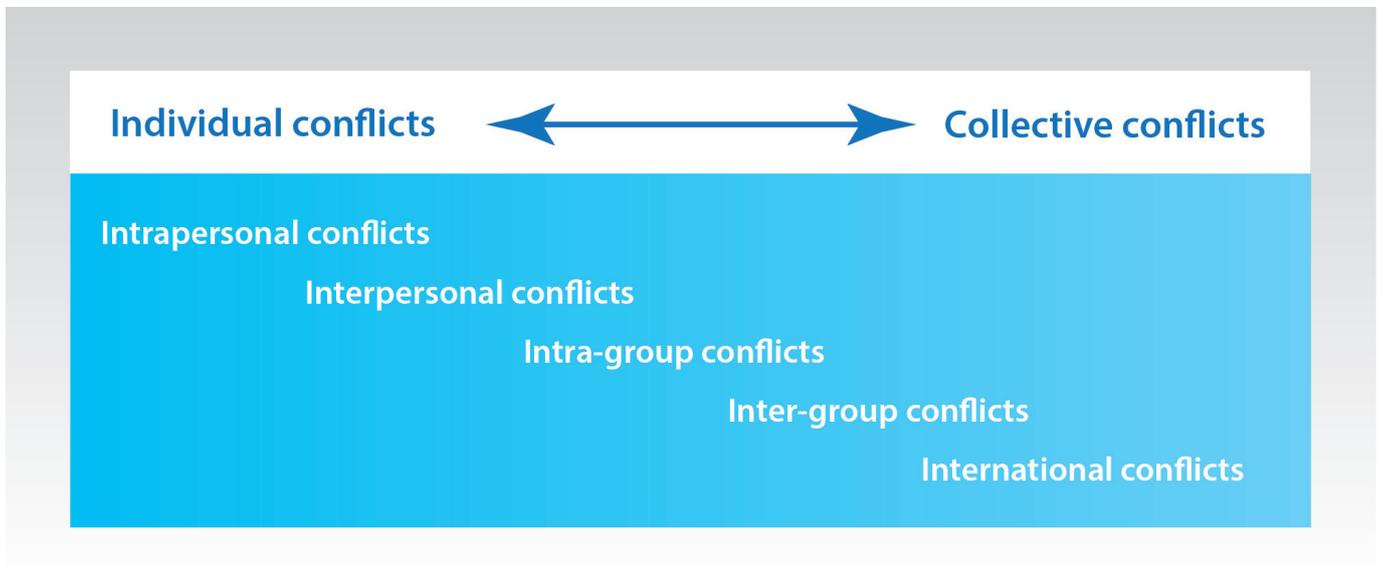


Figure 6: Social complexity of conflicts. Source: our representation

Example of an intra-group conflict:

Residents of an area with a playground and people using this playground have divergent ideas of what constitutes an acceptable noise level on a Sunday morning. At first, the interests of two groups are at odds. At the same time, there are individual people with their respective interests not immediately visible within each group, and they may aim at fulfilling a variety of individual needs (such as the desire for quiet and order for example). Within a group, there may also be people carrying their own conflict inside them. An internal dialogue could go as follows: "On the one hand, I need my peace and quiet and am entitled to both, but on the other hand, it's better if the children are on the playground than in front of a TV ..."

Categorisation according to the degree of escalation

Categorisation can also take the form of gauging the escalation stage of a conflict. Possible intervention steps are dependent on the respective escalation stage. A description of the different stages of escalation can be found in the escalation model following Friedrich Glasl.²³

²³ See Glasl, F. 2010, p. 98ff; Glasl, F.2004, p. 233ff.

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Figure 7: our representation following Glasl 2010, p. 98f and Glasl 2004, p. 234.

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1st level (win-win)

On this level, the parties involved in the conflict have cognitive access to win-win strategies of conflict management. There is still a measure of confidence that both sides can emerge from the conflict unscathed. In this phase, the choice of means is oriented towards finding factual solutions and maintaining a relationship with the other party involved in the conflict.

Stage 1 – Hardening. Opposing viewpoints harden and appear irreconcilable. The situation between the parties involved in the conflict is marked by competition. Due to the tension between them, misunderstandings and uncomfortable situations occur.

Stage 2 – Debate and polarization. The understanding for the other party declines. The disagreements intensify, and positions are framed in a more adversarial way. The parties involved in the conflict no longer listen to each other without bias and interpret their opponent's attitude according to their prejudices. Emotions exert a steadily growing influence on the dynamics. Increasingly the debate devolves into a power struggle/trial of strength, with each party wanting to gain the upper hand by making the stronger argument. This is to the detriment of the accuracy of facts and the propriety of tone.

Stage 3 – Actions replace words. From this point forward, non-verbal communication plays a bigger part, because there is little trust in the opponent and their statements. The sense of unity among members of the same party is strengthened as the internal group pressure rises and the opinions within this group align.

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2nd level (win-lose)

On this level, the way conflicts are handled is shaped by win-lose calculations and the according behaviour. The conflict is experienced more strongly as a relational conflict. The parties involved in the conflict put their own interests and goals above those of the other, and to a significant degree. Their focus is on the assertion of their own position. There is still a fundamental moral respect of the human dignity of the opponent however.

Stage 4 – Worry about one's image and coalitions. The parties involved in the conflict look for supporters. The competence of the opposing party is doubted and challenged, without questioning one's own. The refusal to acknowledge the expertise and skills of the opposing party leads to what may be called self-fulfilling prophecies. To win over more supporters for one's own group, the other party involved in the conflict is made a bogeyman, and that image is disseminated.

Stage 5 – Loss of face. On this level, it is no longer just the competence of the opponent that is drawn into question, but also their moral integrity. The adversarial party is demonized, which, in the worst case, can go as far as dehumanizing the other. One's own perception of the conflict situation is selective. The dissociation from the other party involved in the conflict is very obvious, and even (apparent) sympathisers of the opposing party are ostracised and ignored. The reputation and moral identity of the other party are attacked, which only serves to further harden the fronts.

Stage 6 – Threat strategies and blackmail. The parties involved in the conflict try to use threats to lend more weight to their demands and resort to blackmail to put pressure on the opposing party. Through the formulation of potential sanctions, one party signals that theirs is not an empty threat. The other side in turn must decide how seriously they are going to take the threat. Threats are often answered with counter-threats. Especially if a threat is made public, the pressure to act on it increases, and breaking free from the conflict dynamics is made even more difficult.

3rd level (lose-lose)

On this level of escalation, lose-lose strategies are at the centre for both parties involved in the conflict. They have lost respect for the human dignity of the 'adversary' and are now in fight-and-destroy mode. They accept and condone damages and losses on both sides.

Stage 7 – Limited attempts at destruction. Threats are made good on, while the dehumanisation of the adversary wears on. From this point on, the focus is no longer on one's own side winning but on harming the opponent. Negative actions on one's own side is morally justified, since it serves prevailing in the conflict.

Stage 8 – Fragmentation of the enemy. The attempts at destruction become more widespread, aiming at the absolute destruction of the opponent through the sabotage of sub-systems.

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Stage 9 – Together into the abyss. The destruction of the adversarial party is the highest goal, and that involves taking losses, accepting the possibility of one's own ruin. The parties involved in the conflict seize on every opportunity to harm the opponent, even if that has negative consequences for their own side.



Exercise 9: Becoming familiar with the order of the stages of escalation

Use the depiction of the escalation stages in the picture box 'Streitkultur'²⁴ (=culture of debate) and have the students put the escalation stages in the right order, one set of stages per small group. Discuss any deviations that may occur.



Exercise 10: Allocating conflicts to the escalation stages

Have the participants allocate different conflict scenarios to the model of escalation stages. They can draw on their own examples from previous exercises. Put the following questions up for discussion:

- Which factors contribute to the escalation of the conflict?
- Which factors have the potential for contributing to a de-escalation?
- What alternative possible behaviours might have defused the conflict?
- When did the first signs of conflict appear?

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Forms of help along the escalation stages above

Friedrich Glasl went beyond the mere categorisation of conflicts and matched the different stages of escalation with suitable conflict management formats. The diagram depicts possible methods. It also makes clear at what point the option of self-help is no longer a viable one.

Glasl's escalation stages provide us with different possible entry points for conflict management. As mentioned elsewhere in this handbook (see [Module A2: The process of local conflict counselling](#)), local conflict counselling can be employed in different phases of the conflict and thus have a de-escalating, facilitating or curative effect. Ideally, local conflict counselling begins at stages 2 to 5. It can also set in at stages 6 and 7,

²⁴ Gugel, Günther/ Jäger, Uli (2015, 6th edition): Streitkultur - Eine Bilderbox. Konflikteskalation und Konfliktbearbeitung. Berghof Foundation.

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to support mediating and conciliatory measures. For a detailed look at the methods of conflict counselling, please peruse [Module C](#).

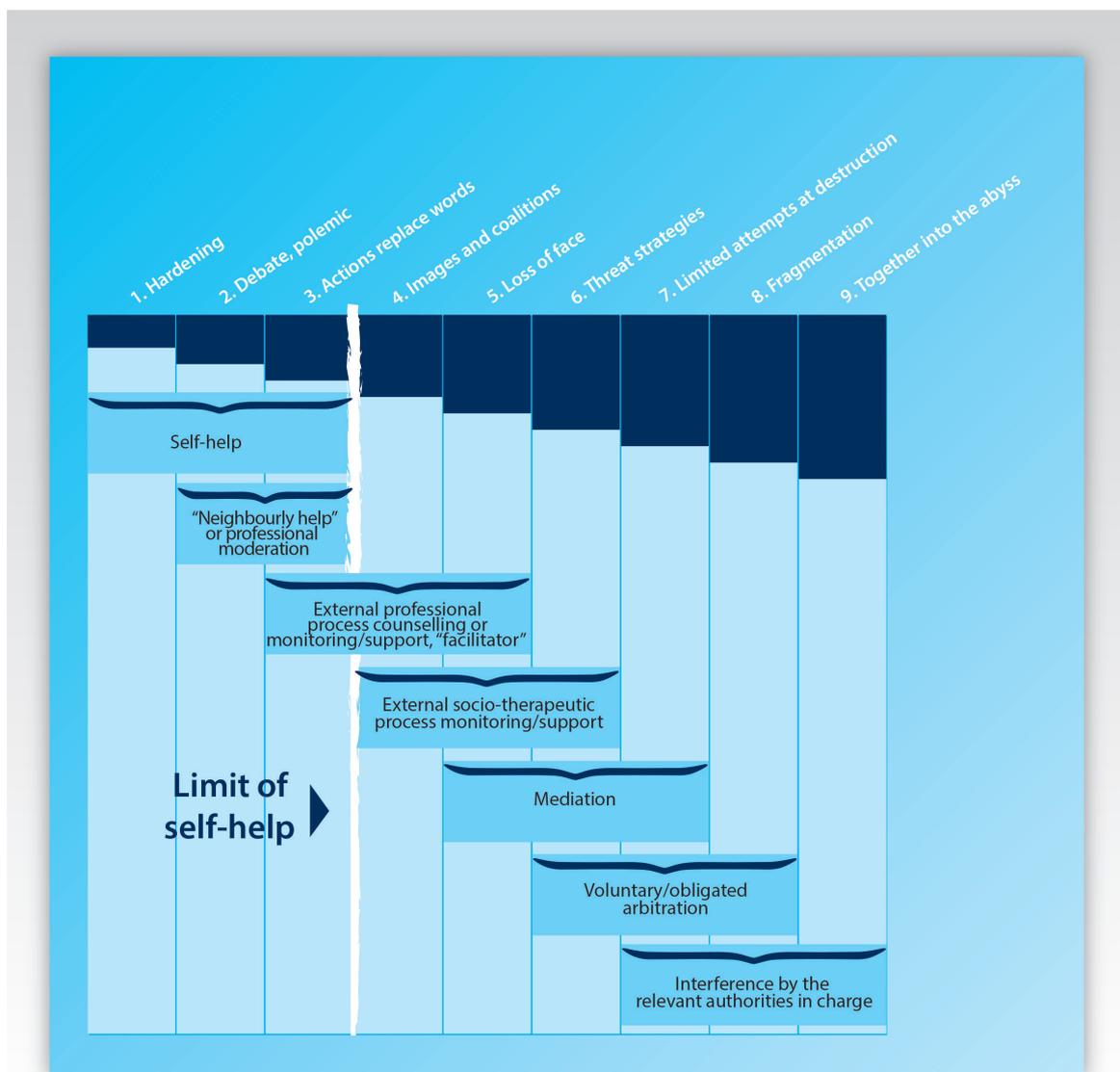


Figure 8: The 9 stages of escalation and different forms of help, translated from Glasl 2010, p. 138



The forms of conflict management after Glasl can be introduced at the end of the session on the escalation stages, mentioning that **Module C** will go further into detail. Alternatively, the forms of help may be left out here and introduced as a starting point for working with **Module C**.

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B-2 Systemic conflict analysis and management

B-2.1 Thinking and working systemically in local conflict counselling

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First developed in the natural sciences, theories of systemic thought and action also caught on in economics and the social sciences, as well as in counselling practice. A system has, by definition, fixed boundaries – set from without – and is embedded in superordinate and subordinate systems (supra- and sub-systems). It consists of elements and their interrelations, and it can be demarcated from the surrounding systems.

Defining a system and its boundaries is essential for systemic thinking and working with systems. To do that, you select certain interrelated elements and treat them as a system from then on. Within the system, these elements influence each other and are mutually dependent, because they have specific relations with each other. The systemic gaze thus shifts the focus towards the interdependencies of elements within the system as well as those of the system in question with other, corresponding systems.

A systemic perspective keeps the entire system and the extant relationship within the system in sight/view, instead of focusing exclusively on causalities. Processes thus do not take place linearly (in the sense of cause => effect) but are the expression of multiple relationships and interdependencies between the elements of the system. Therefore, it makes sense to depict systemically viewed processes as circular structures, for example in the form of the spiral of the counselling process (see [Module A, page 25](#)), or in the form of feedback loops (see below in this module).

For local conflict counselling work, we define so-called 'social systems', the elements of which are individuals, groups and organisations that are connected through social relations. In practice, the approach applies systemic thinking in the form of systemic situation and conflict analyses. Beyond that, systemic conflict counselling uses insights from systemic organisation development and instruments from systemic therapy approaches, employing for example question techniques or a process-oriented attitude of the counsellors for the work with local conflict systems (for more on this, see [Module C](#)). A systemic approach is essential for the concept of local conflict counselling. It allows for the systematic management of conflict dynamics with their interdependencies, presents a range of starting points for intervention and leads away from one-dimensional finger-pointing or victim-offender explanations.

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Case example:

When dealing with a conflict between residents of a shared accommodation and its neighbours, a systemic conflict counselling perspective does not view the accommodation as a separate system: If it did, the actions and behaviour of the neighbours would not be considered in their interrelation with the residents, and resources for conflict management from outside of the accommodation would not be a central focus. For a preliminary system definition, we must assume that the conflict system under consideration includes at least individuals and groups within the shared accommodation and within the neighbourhood, as well as from the municipality. We also need to describe the quality of the relationships between those 'elements' of the system: Who is in a relationship of dependence with whom? What solidary or supportive relationships exist? Etc.

This defined system can be influenced by supra-systems in federal politics, groups and factions from abroad or stipulations issued by federal authorities such as the German Federal Agency of Migration and Refugees (BAMF) for example. Likewise, influences from a sub-system, such as relationships within the operating company in charge of the accommodation, may affect the conflict process.

Guiding questions for the application of systemic thinking in local conflict counselling:

- What types of elements can be found in a conflict system?
- What kinds of relationships between elements can be found?
- What are the pivotal criteria for the definition of system boundaries?
- What types of influences on the defined conflict system are likely for local conflicts connected to migration and integration?



Exercise 11: Discussion

Find examples of systems and elements, drawing on from the students' experience (in organisations, institutions, municipalities, authorities).

What changes if the system boundaries are set differently: from the team to the institution, to the organisation or association, to the municipality etc?

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B-2.2 Selected instruments of systemic conflict analysis and management

When preparing situation and conflict analyses, we use different instruments. With the help of those instruments, we can identify the modes of action between the elements of a system or map actors and their relationships with each other. The majority of those instruments was developed in what is called civilian conflict counselling.



In the practice of local conflict counselling, there are different forms of systemic conflict analysis that make use of the instruments portrayed here. You can find them in the different management concepts for local conflict counselling.²⁵



The instruments specify structural elements and models for the representation of the relation between the elements. Mainly, they enable the visualisation of analysis results that were developed in a participatory process.

B-2.2.1 Positions, interests and needs

Behind the official, often seemingly irreconcilable positions of the parties involved in the conflict, interests and needs can be uncovered, which allows for sustainable conflict management that takes the causes into account. The first step is identifying the different parties and the object of the conflict (see the formula used for describing the conflict on page 50).

Next, the positions, interests and needs of the parties involved in the conflict are mapped out. The goal of this is that the parties are brought closer together (again) by way of fostering the understanding for the other party. Moreover, the consideration of positions, interests and needs offers the counsellors a comprehensive insight into the perspectives of the respective parties. The consideration of the respective needs²⁶ is especially important for re-establishing understanding and trust between the parties involved in the conflict. On this basis, effective and sustainable courses of action may be developed subsequently.

²⁵ The application of qualitative sociological interview and observation methods and the drafting of conflict maps as employed in violence prevention (cf. Gugel (2006), p. 234) can be found in: Lustig (2010). The application of systemic conflict analysis as described in civilian conflict management can be found in: Berndt (2012).

²⁶ Our usage of the term needs follows the concept of non-violent communication after Marshall B. Rosenberg (2006): Eine Sprache des Friedens sprechen – in einer konfliktreichen Welt, pp. 31f & 126f. in English: A Language of Peace.

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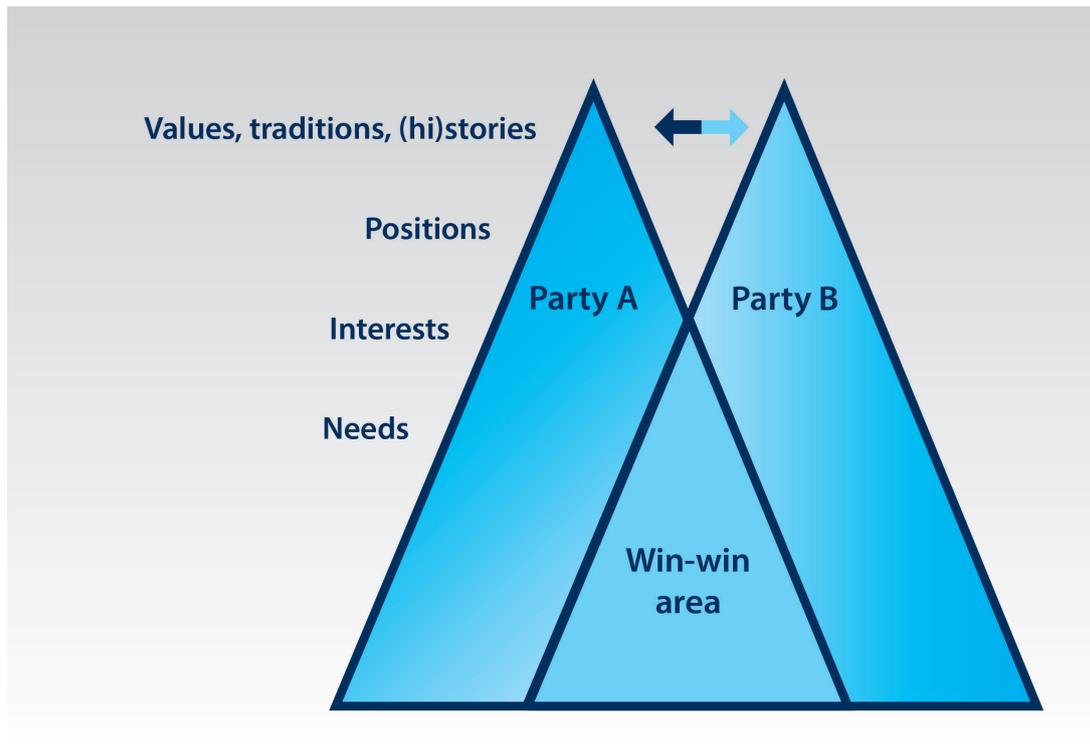


Figure 9: Needs, interests and positions. Source: Our representation, inspired by various others, e.g. "The Onion" in Fisher, Abdi et al. "Working with Conflict", 2007, p. 28.

Values are fundamental orientations that people's actions are based on. They may be ethical principles, cultural norms or rules mandated by religion. Often, values are connected to traditions and are cited for the justification ("explanation") of positions.

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Positions are standpoints that are imparted quite formally and often publicly. They are what the person or group advocates or champions. They arise/are formed due to a specific, subjective view of the situation, the conflict and the role of each party involved in the conflict. To justify or legitimise these views, values are often invoked.

An **interest** is what we call the drive behind the positions. It is often veiled or concealed and should be revealed as part of the management of the conflict. Frequently there are several interests an actor pursues in a given conflict. They are negotiable, and their significance may vary over time. They provide an answer to the question: What does the respective party want?

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Needs are even more fundamental underlying motivations for human actions and behaviour. They are universal and capable of bringing people in contact again with the human part of the 'adversary', even in a conflict. Examples of needs include safety, protection/shelter, identity, community, acceptance or clarity. They can be different for different people in the same situation, but everyone has them and knows them on a fundamental level. Needs are non-negotiable but may be fulfilled in different ways (e.g. people attempt to protect themselves from physical violence either by carrying a weapon or through dialogue). The fact that there are different courses of action for the fulfilment of a need opens a space for negotiation. Needs provide an answer to the question: What does the respective party need? They go deeper than interests and frequently, the person in question is not aware of them. Recognising them bears the greatest potential for win-win solutions and cooperation. Their role is explored in detail in the concept of non-violent communication after Marshall B. Rosenberg, which is applicable in the form of communication models (self-empathy, listening empathically, expressing honestly).

Example:

A mayor's position may be that the same rules must apply to asylum seekers and locals. His interest is placating the local opponents of the refugee accommodation. The underlying need may be the community's safety or his personal livelihood – if he hopes to keep his constituents on his side, for example.



Exercise 12: Partner interview

Divide the participants into pairs and have them interview each other using the following talking points:

- Have them recapitulate the conflict described in B-1.3.
- Have them identify the reference points of the parties involved in the conflict: values, traditions, (hi)stories.
- Have them define the positions, interest and needs of both parties involved in the conflict.

The interview partner listens closely and makes sure that both the object and the parties involved in the conflict are already identified as precisely as possible, including their positions, interests and needs. Through perspective adoption, the suggestion of needs and specific inquiry, the participants arrive at the level of the underlying reasons, in the form of needs: What was the 'real' impetus for the observed action? What exactly was important to the different actors in that situation? What was the other person's 'actual' concern?

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In doing these exercises, it should be highlighted that it is easier to identify positions and interests than to get to the bottom of the underlying needs. However, since the needs particularly offer the key to sustainable conflict management on the level of the individuals involved and their relationships, you can offer an additional exercise tailored to the participants' prior knowledge. We recommend working with needs lists, which were developed in NVC, non-violent communication after Marshall B. Rosenberg.²⁷ A simple exercise would involve printing the needs on index cards and handing them out one set each to a small group (5 people). One person in the group then talks about a situation they are grappling with, while the others gather the needs of that person as they identify them in her telling. Then the teller orders the cards in a way that makes sense to them, letting the others follow the process by talking about their reasoning. They can ask their team members questions to understand why they added a particular card.

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Mapping actors and their positions, interests and needs:

Creating an actor map with their positions, interests and needs encourages counsellors and involved local partners to become aware of the multiple factors influencing the conflict and its object, and to reach a clearer understanding of the different emotional states of the individuals involved and their underlying motivations.



Exercise 13:

Create a map of the positions, interests and needs of the actors involved in the conflict you used in the previous exercise (or use the case studies in part 2 of this handbook instead). The goal is to define and understand the conflict process.

Use the following steps for this exercise:

1. Definition of the conflict under scrutiny according to the formula previously introduced: Conflict between actors A and B (and C, D, ... as the case may be) about O (object) at point in time T (ideally now, at this time).
2. Definition of the object of the conflict in such a manner that all parties involved in the conflict can agree on (= centre of the map).
3. Identification of the important actors and their positions vis-à-vis the object of the conflict, arrangement in groups around the object.
4. For each actor respectively: Listing the identification of interests, needs and possibly fears. Fears or worries allow for inferences about needs and interests.

²⁷ Rosenberg, Marshall B. 2004, p. 32f.

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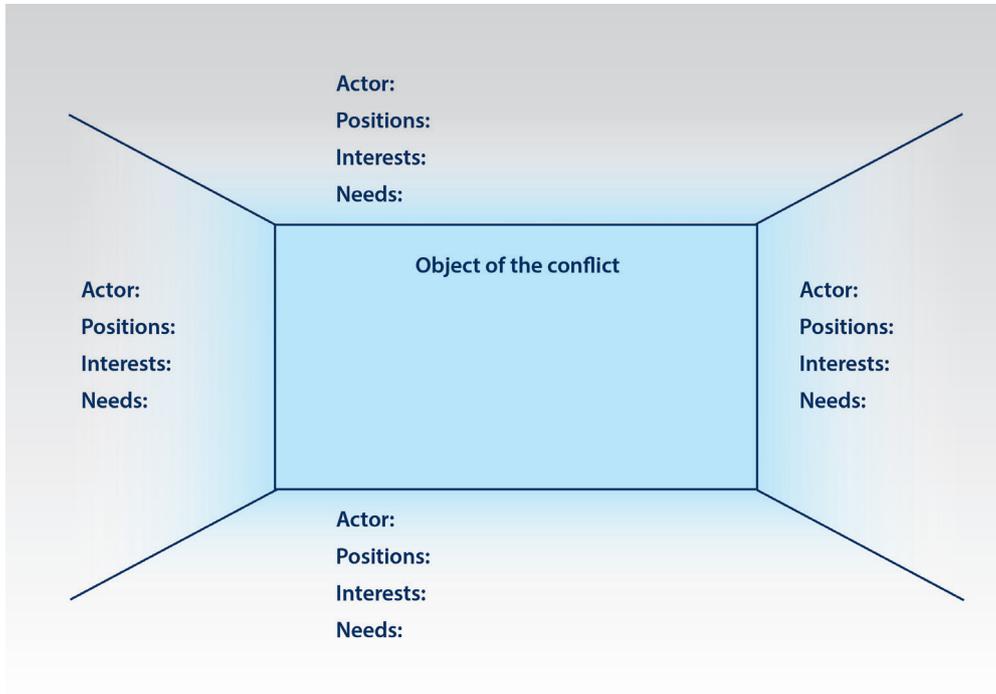
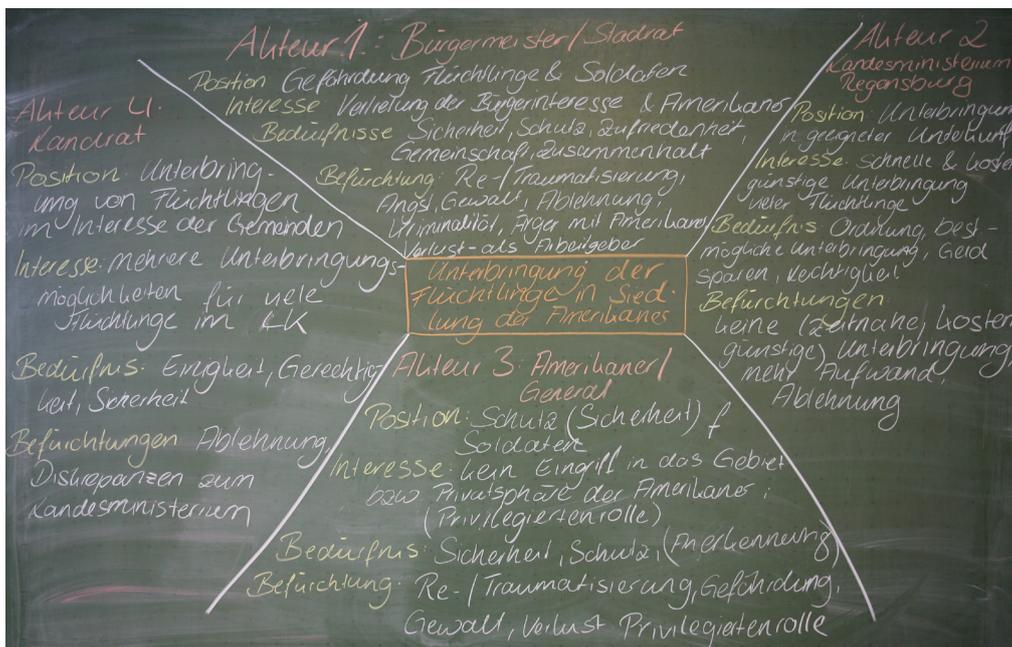


Figure 10: Mapping positions, interests and needs. Source: our representation



If necessary, define the terms "proponent" and "opponent" more precisely. They are not valid labels for actors, but express positions.



Source: seminar at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW)

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B-2.2.2 Map of actor relationships

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This instrument of conflict analysis aims at depicting the actors and their relationships within a conflict at a defined point in time. It serves to gain a clear understanding of those constellations. Counsellors use it so they themselves understand the involved parties and their relations, but they also employ drawing up the map in their moderating/facilitating function, trying to gain a shared idea of a conflict system by involving the conflict parties in a participatory process.

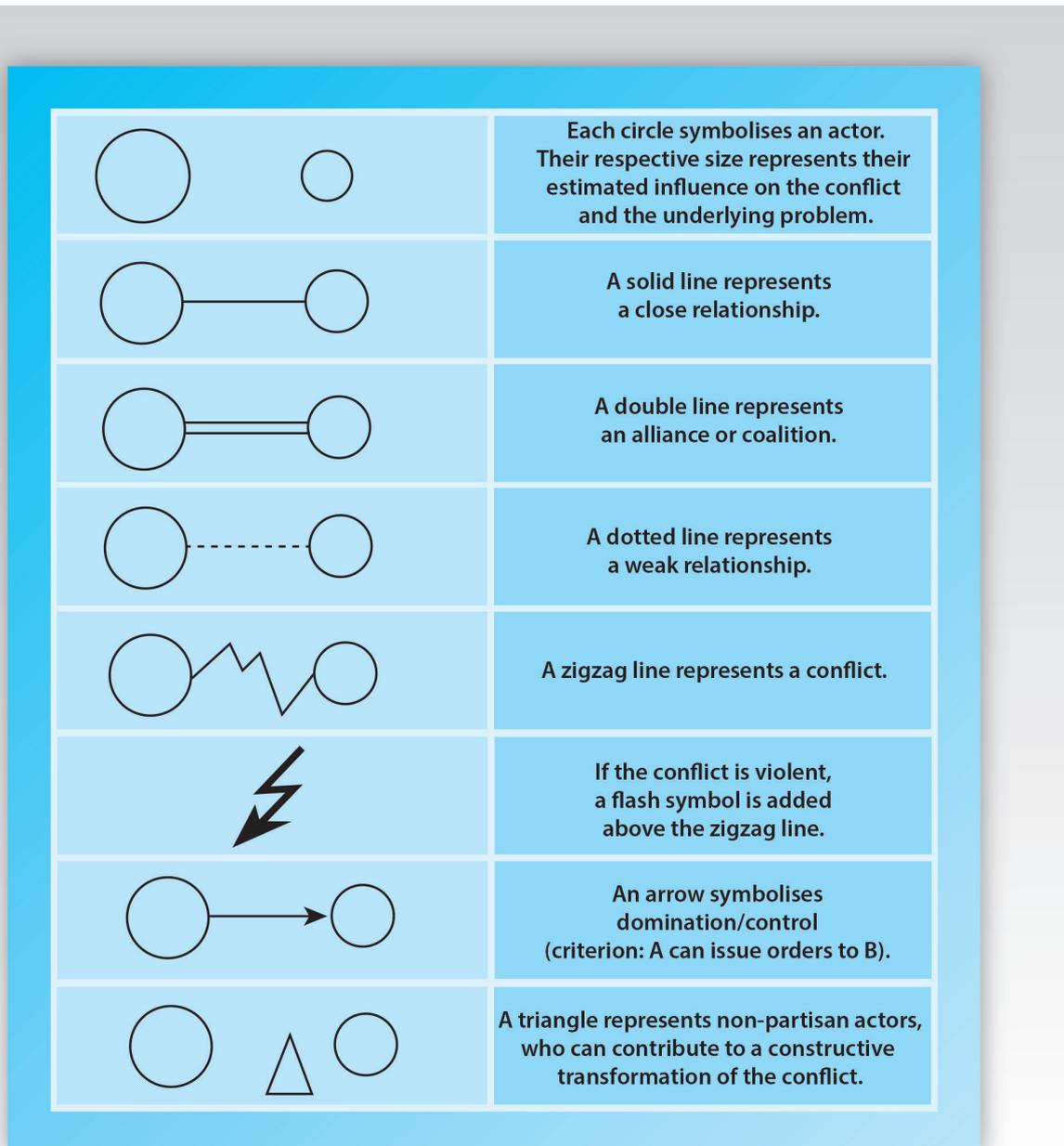


Figure 11: Map of actor relationships. Based on "Conflict Mapping", in Fisher, Abdi et al. 2007, p. 23.

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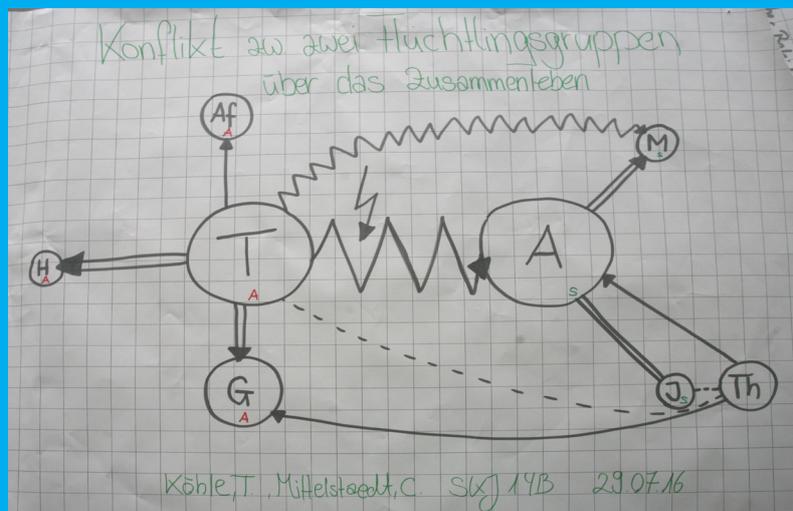
Exercise 14: Map of actor relationships:

Have participants draw up a map of the actor relationships in a previously defined conflict.

As before, participants should start by defining the conflict that is being analysed, using the model: "Conflict between A and B (central actors) about O (object) at point of time T".

Then the participants analyse and visualise the relationships between actors, using the symbols introduced above. They start with the central actors between which the conflict is taking place. Next, they take the extended conflict system into account (actors here include individuals, groups, organisations).

Central questions to answer: What other actors exert influence on the conflict dynamics? What are their relationships to the other actors ?



Source: seminar at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW)



When identifying non-partisan actors, participants (and you as their instructor) need to pay extra attention: Frequently, it becomes clear in the visual depiction that actors designated as non-partisan should be identified as partisan after all. Tell participants to return to the non-partisan actors at the end of the exercise and look at them again in context, to make sure they have been categorised correctly.



Depending on the group dynamics and choice of conflicts in the preceding exercises, participants can work with the already selected conflicts or choose new ones for this task.

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B-2.2.3 Development of feedback loops

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Feedback loops are another form of visualisation of conflict dynamics that put the focus on assumptions of dynamic causal connections between actors and their activities.²⁸

The basic distinction is between reinforcing and balancing feedback loops. Reinforcing loops illustrate connections that lead to further escalation, whereas balancing feedback loops point to starting points and resources for the constructive management of the conflicts.

Elements of feedback loops and their visual representation:

Causal links	
Reinforcing feedback loop	(R)/(V)
Balancing feedback loop	(B)/(A)
Delays: An arrow is crossed by two dotted horizontal lines if we assume that something will take delayed effect.	
Hypotheses with basic assumptions, attitudes, convictions or beliefs that take effect as motivation for an action or decision	

Fig. 12: Elements of feedback loops and their visual representation. Source: Our representation.

²⁸ CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2013): Reflecting in Peace Practice. Advanced Training of Consultants and Advisors. Cambridge Collaborative Learning Projects (www.cdainc.com).

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Reinforcing feedback loops

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Source: seminar at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW)

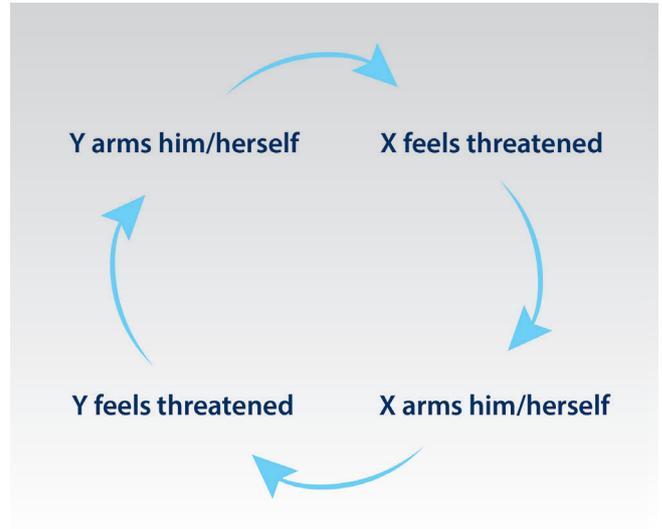


Figure 13: Reinforcing feedback loop
© Hagen, Berndt/Sylvia Lustig



Exercise 15:

Prepare the following elements of a reinforcing feedback loop on index cards:

- The urban community is divided.
- Youths in the neighbourhood are organising in gangs that engage in petty crime.
- People from the neighbourhood are viewed with suspicion (in shops, when they apply for jobs).
- Youths have limited opportunities for social integration.
- Residents of the neighbourhood perceive themselves as excluded and marginalised.
- The police cracks down on criminals.

Prepare enough sets of cards so the students can form small groups and develop the feedback loop by connecting the elements with the help of arrows.

As a second step, the students then reflect on the hypotheses these causalities are based on. They write them down on cloud-shaped moderation cards and assign them to the respective actors in the cycle/loop.



In this chapter, you find examples of elements for the exercises on feedback loops. Adding your own examples (possibly simplified) from your work in local conflict counselling may be useful here, too, to provide insight into the actual practice of conflict counselling. You can enhance the presentation of the conflict context by employing audio-visual media, to give participants a more personal impression. Make sure you alter details when you introduce your own examples.

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The point of this exercise is not to find the one 'correct' solution but to encourage participants to present thoughtful options that can be discussed and elaborated on. Thus, different solutions and representations are possible.

Balancing feedback loops

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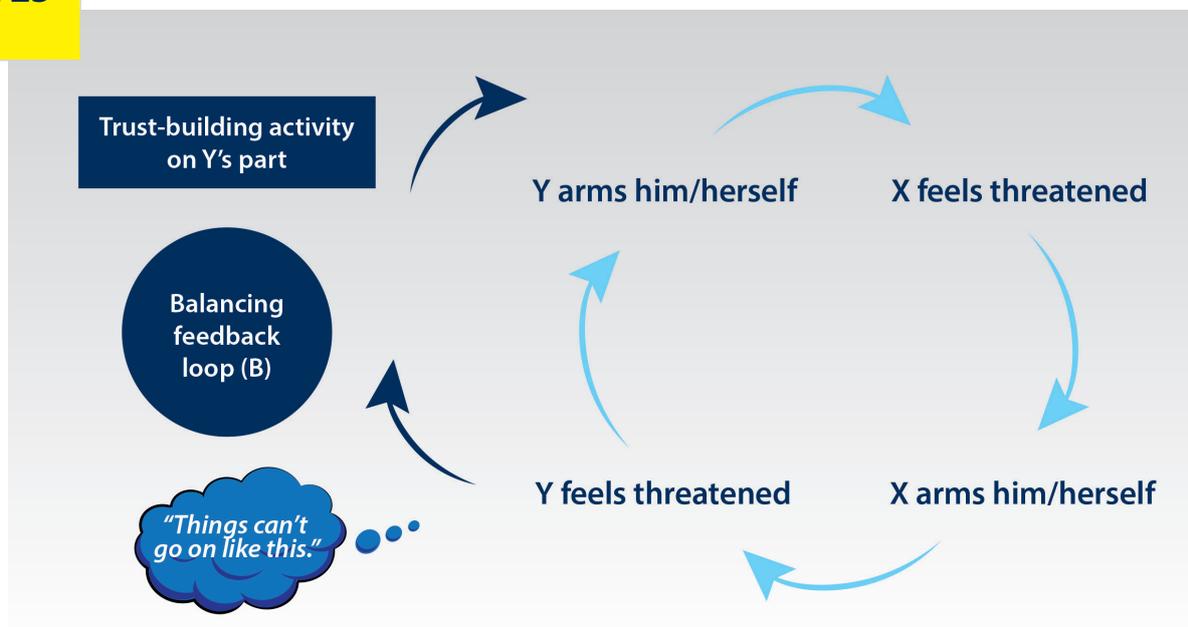


Figure 14: Balancing feedback loop © Hagen, Berndt/Sylvia Lustig



Exercise 16:

Complementing the exercise on reinforcing feedback loops, prepare another set of cards for the participants, this time with the elements of a balancing loop (see below).

The participants assemble a balancing feedback loop from the elements provided, and then merge it with the previously created reinforcing feedback loop:

- A streetworker is deployed to establish contact with the youths in the neighbourhood (playing football on the football ground)
- Street parties and family celebrations are organised in the neighbourhood
- Intercultural workshops for the police force (e.g. Yazidi culture, Islam etc.)
- Sports clubs actively woo and recruit young athletes from the neighbourhood
- Round table with representatives from the municipality and the migrants

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Interlocking feedback loops

Slide 26

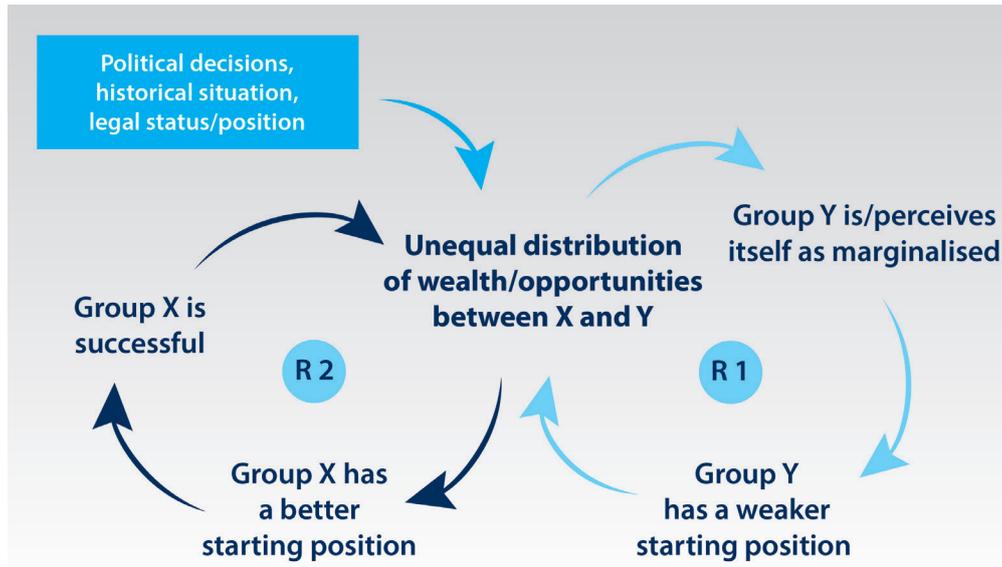


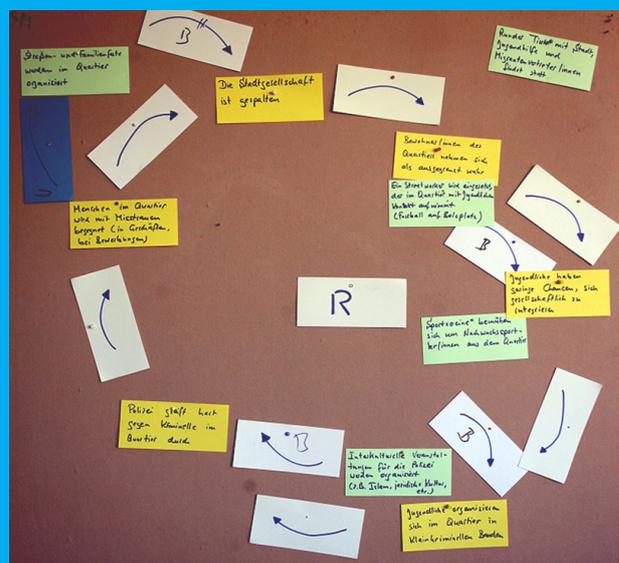
Figure 15: Interlocking feedback loops © Hagen, Berndt/Sylvia Lustig



Exercise 17:

Participants should create two interlocking feedback loops, drawing on a new example. Like in the previous exercises, you provide them with the following elements on index cards:

- Religious affiliation is instrumentalised for political mobilisation
- A political party is looking for a rousing topic
- Stereotypes, rumours, attributions exist
- Groups live in separate worlds (socially, spatially) and ignorance of each other
- Fear and suspicion
- The public is being mobilised: "concerned citizens"
- Attacks, scaring and unsettling people
- Mutual recriminations
- Radical groups are formed and prepare clandestine activities/operations



Source: seminar at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW)

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

The following illustration shows an example of the interlocking feedback loops that are developed in the systemic conflict analysis of local conflict counselling:

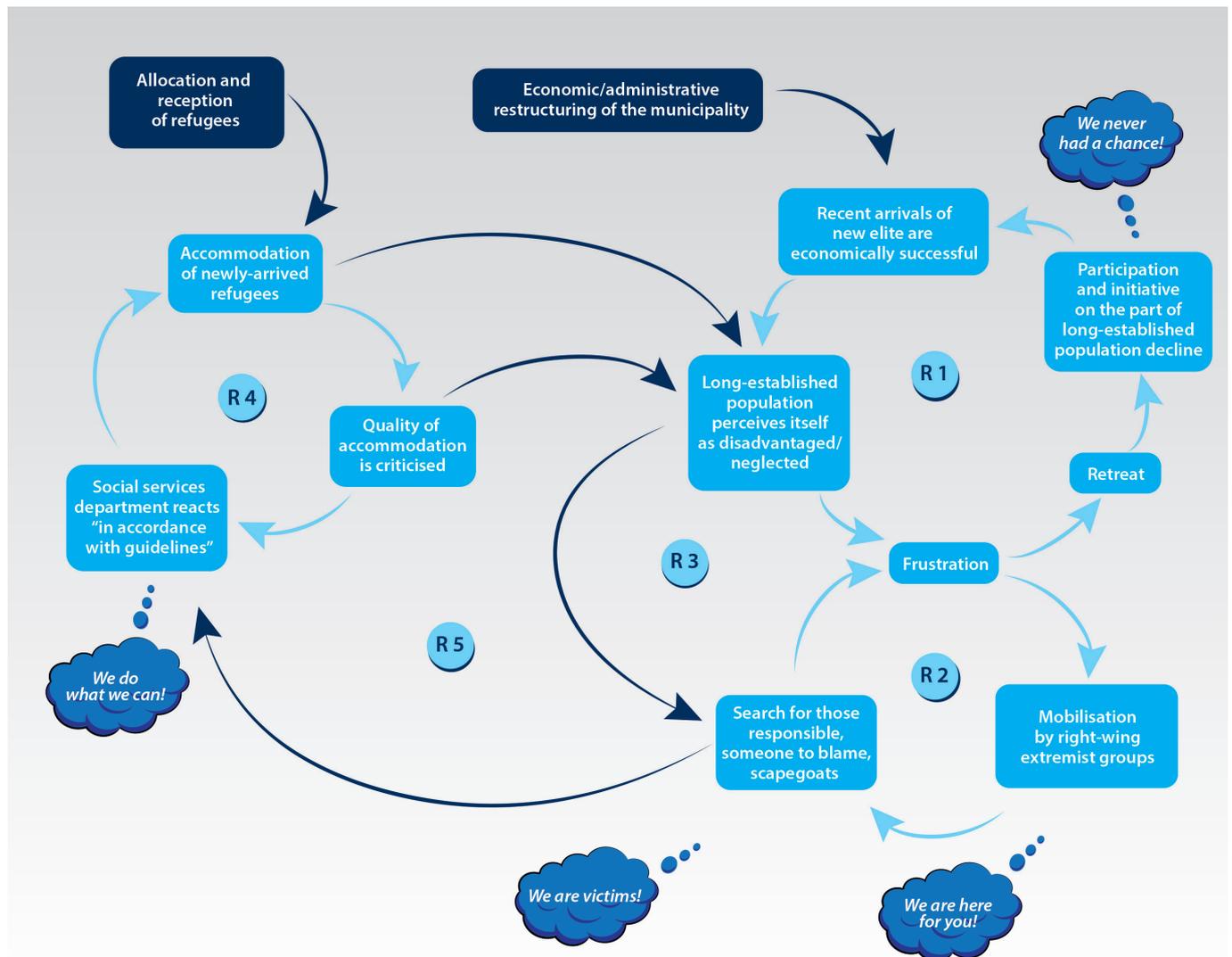


Figure 16: Interlocking feedback loops. Source: Berndt, H./Lustig, S. 2016, p.102.



For a stronger connection to actual practice, we recommend introducing a case from your own local conflict counselling work in the discussion and draw on it when putting together the elements for the exercises. Compare the actual case with the results of the students' group work and point out the difficulties that arose in real-world counselling.

Appendix for Module B: Presentations and Exercise Sheets

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Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

Content

Module B: Systemic conflict management in local conflict counselling

B-1 Conflict: Concept and meaning

- B-1.1 The concept of conflict
- B-1.2 Differentiation between conflict and other terms
- B-1.3 Conflict as an engine of social change
- B-1.4 Categorisations of conflicts

B-2 Systemic conflict analysis and conflict management

- B-2.1 Thinking and working systemically in local conflict counselling
- B-2.2 Analysis of positions, interests and needs
- B-2.3 Map of the actor relationships
- B-2.4 Feedback loops

Learning objectives

- You are able to define „conflict“ and have formed an understanding of the concept.
- You are able to differentiate between conflict and other terms and concepts.
- You have gained an understanding of the vital elements of conflict dynamics.
- You understand the process of conflict escalation.
- You understand that in democratic societies, conflicts are an expression of social change.
- You understand which methods of conflict analysis are employed when and to what end.
- You are able to apply selected instruments of systemic conflict analysis to concrete examples from your work and private life.



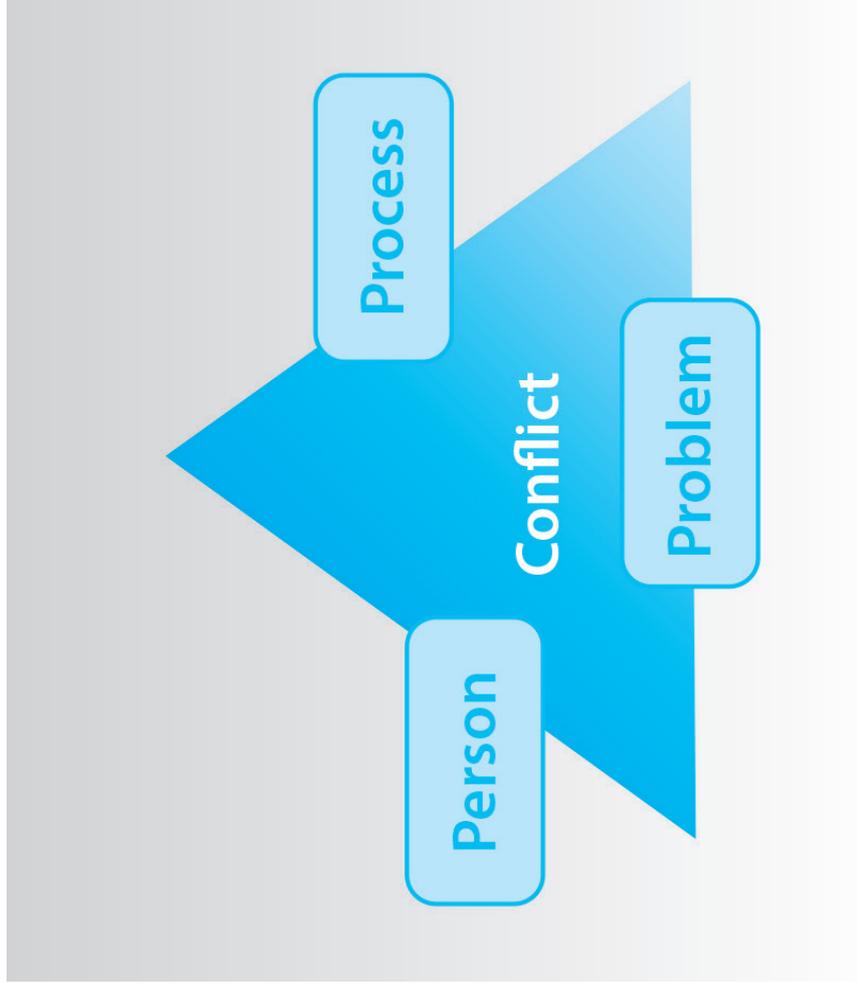
Definition of conflict

“Social conflict is an interaction

- between actors (individuals, groups, organisations etc.),
- wherein at least one actor
- experiences disparities or incompatibilities
 - » in perception and imagination,
 - » in feeling and wanting
- with the other actor (or actors) in such a way
- that a realisation of what the actor thinks, feels or wants
- is impaired by another actor (or actors).”

(Friedrich Glasl (2002), Selbsthilfe in Konflikten, p. 24)

The three sides of a conflict



Fundamentally, a conflict consists of three sides:

- **Person** (Who? Their concern or objective)
- **Problem** (Underlying conditions, factual information, available re-sources)
- **Process** (Dynamics, relationships in flux...)

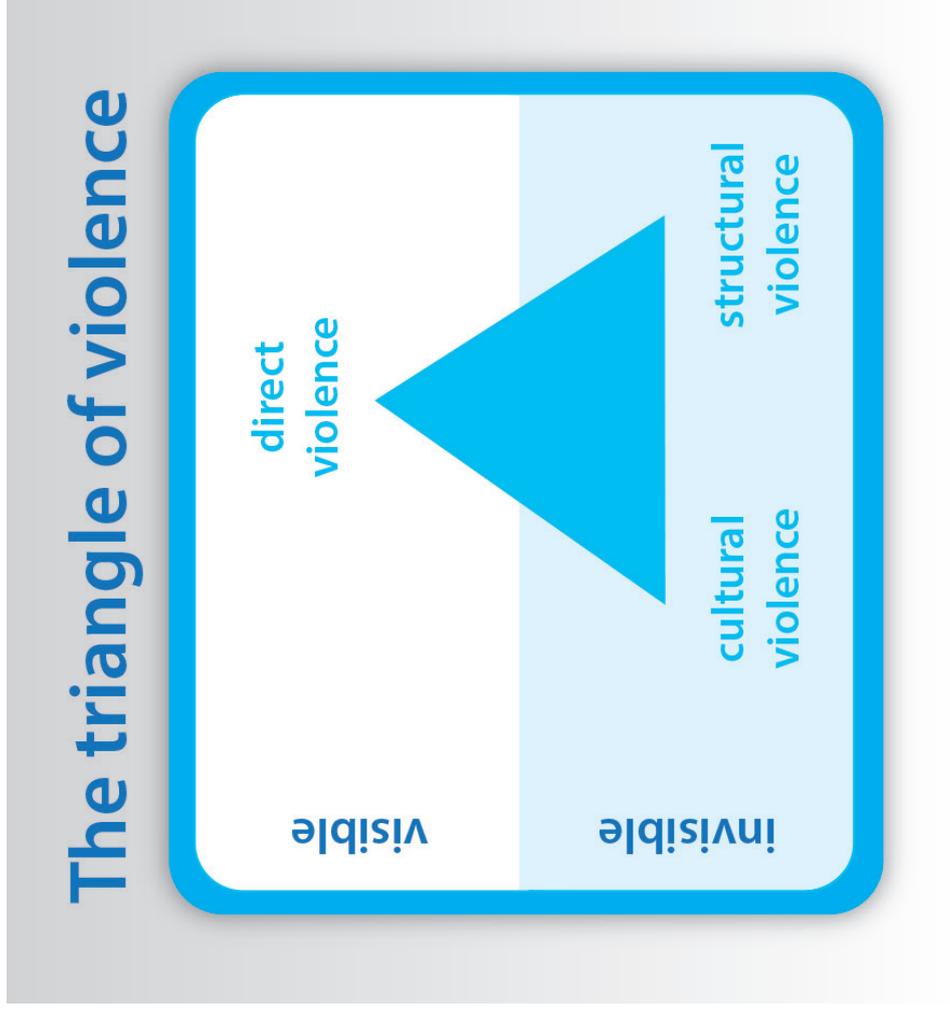
“Problem” versus “conflict”

- Every conflict is based on one or more problems but conversely, not all problems will turn into conflicts.
- For a problem to become a conflict, what is added is the perception that an impairment of one’s own actions by at least one other person exists.

“Escalation” versus “conflict”

- In the context of conflict management, an escalation describes an intensification of a conflict, which is started by specific actions or reactions on the part of the involved parties.

The concept of violence, according to Johan Galtung



Our representation, based on Galtung

Galtung's concept of "direct (personal) violence"

- Means “purely physical harm or an attack on life and limb [...] (with killing as its most extreme form) – a subjective act that intends this as a consequence”.
- Occurs “if there is a sender, an actor that intends the consequences of this violence”.

Sources:

Galtung, Johan (1975b), p. 9.

Galtung, Johan (2001), p. 16.



Galtung's concept of "structural violence"

- Is everything that impairs self-fulfilment, personal growth or the fulfilment of human needs.
- It is “built into the system and manifests itself in an unequal balance of power [...], unequal opportunities in life”.
- In the case of structural violence, “there is nobody who emerges to directly harm somebody else”. Neither the existence of structures of this sort nor their ramifications are obvious to the individual.
- “We can thus speak of structural violence any time social systems are organised in such a way that unequal opportunities in life and crass differences in positions of power, with their attendant opportunities for influence, become the social principle of existence”.

Sources:

Ferdowski, Mir A. (1981), p.114
Galtung, Johan (1975a), p.8
Galtung, Johan (1975b), p.12



Galtung's concept of "cultural violence"

- „(...) those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our world, – think of religion and ideology, language and art, the empirical and formal sciences (logic, mathematics) – which may be used to justify direct or structural violence.”
- „This form of violence does not kill or maim anyone, but it contributes to justification.”

Sources:

Galtung, Johan (1998), p.341
Galtung, Johan (1990), p.291ff



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“War” versus “conflict”

War is defined as a violent mass conflict that exhibits all the following characteristics:

- Two or more armed forces
- Centrally controlled organisation of the warring parties and the battles on both sides
- The armed operations ensue with a measure of consistency

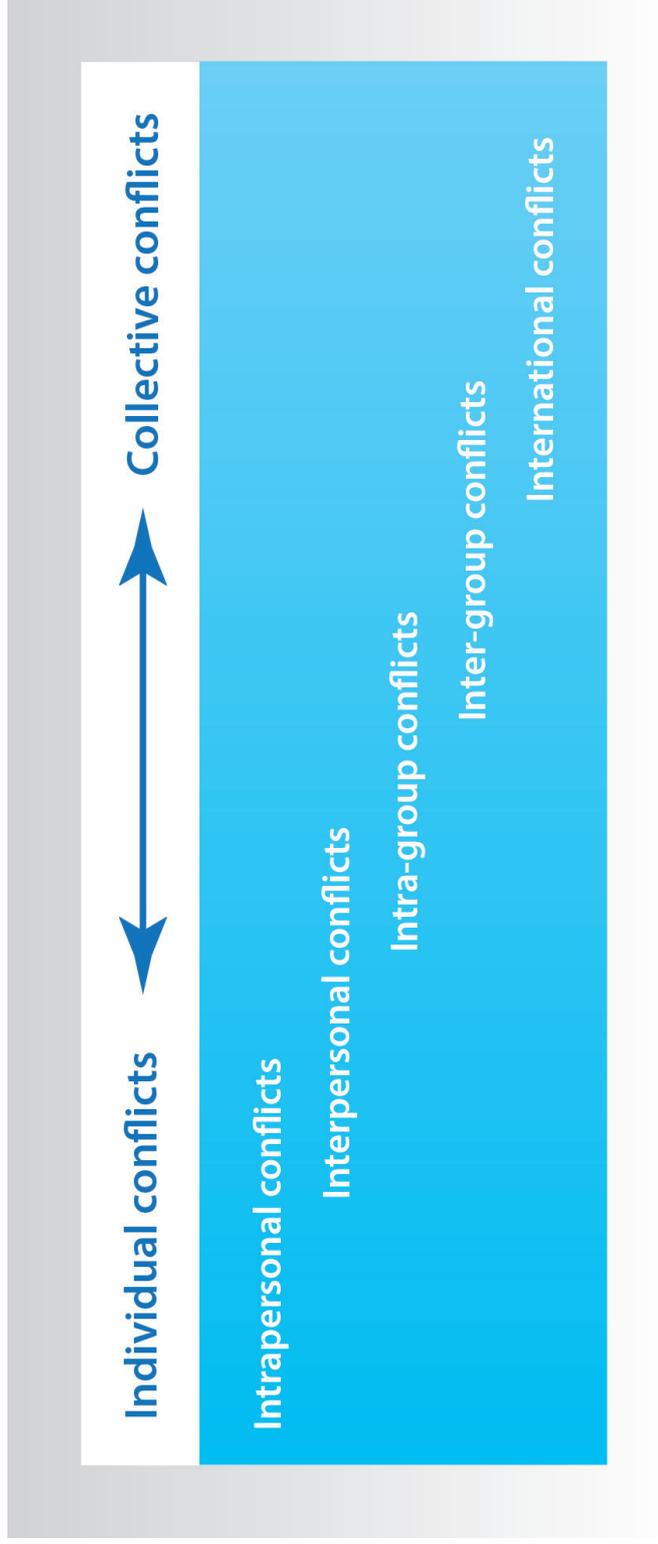
Source:

<https://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/fachbereich-sowi/professuren/jakobeit/forschung/akuf/kriegsdefinition.html>, accessed 18 Dec. 2017

Conflict as an engine of social change

- Conflicts are normal and express social change.
- Conflicts force us to leave our comfort zone.
- Conflicts posit opportunities and dangers at the same time.
- Despite conflict competency, conflicts may overwhelm a person.
- Local conflict counsellors search for ways to transform conflicts, involving the local actors: Away from the search for simple solutions, towards the question: „What is a suitable process to increase the probability of the actors finding a fitting solution?“

Categorisation according to the level of social complexity



Source: Our representation

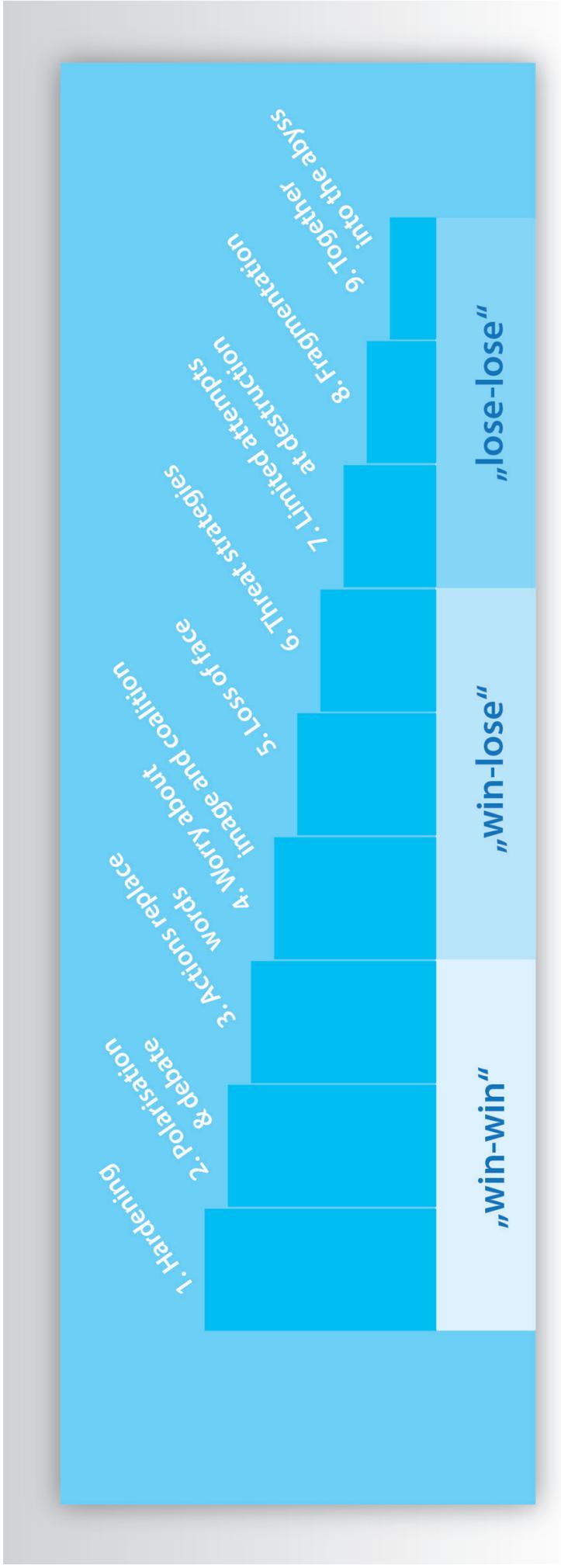
Categorisation of conflicts by social complexity

Intra-personal conflicts are conflicts within an individual. Management takes place through supervision, therapy, collegial and friendly counselling etc.

Social conflicts

- **Inter-personal conflicts:** conflicts between two or more people about an object or issue
- **Intra-group conflicts:** conflicts within a group, whereby group dynamics begin to play a bigger role;
- **Inter-group conflicts:** conflicts between groups, e.g. different political parties, unions or employer representatives. Collective identities exert considerable influence on the dynamics in inter-group conflicts.
- **International conflicts:** intergovernmental and transnational conflicts that also involve non-governmental actors

Categorisation according to the degree of escalation (following Friedrich Glasl)



Source: Glasl (1990)

Forms of help **along the stages of escalation according to F. Glasl**

- **Stage 1-3: Self-help**
- **Stage 2-3: Moderation**
- **Stage 3-5: Process counselling**
- **Stage 4-6: Socio-therapeutic process monitoring/support**
- **Stage 5-7: Mediation**
- **Stage 6-8: Voluntary/obligated arbitration**
- **Stage 7-9: Interference by the authorities**

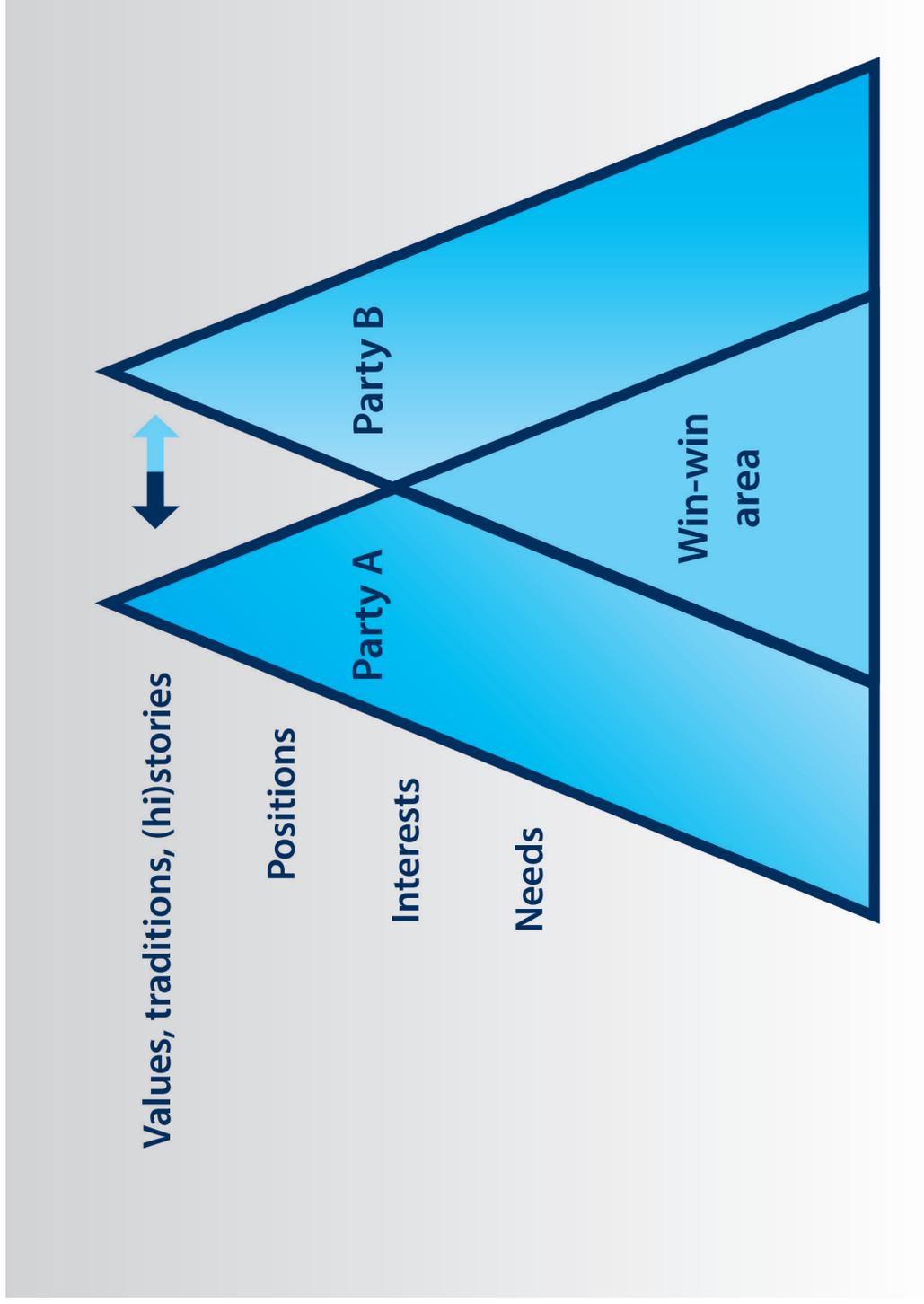


Thinking and working systemically in local conflict counselling

- **System:** A meaningful unit of elements which influence each other and are mutually dependent (elements, interrelations). A system has fixed boundaries and is embedded in superordinate and subordinate systems (supra- and sub-systems).
- **Systemic perspective:** keeps the entire system and the extant relationship within the system in sight/view, instead of focusing exclusively on causalities.
- **Social systems in local conflict counselling:** Elements are individuals, groups or organisations that are connected through social relations.
- **Application:** In systemic counselling and systemic conflict analysis



Positions, interests, needs



Our representation, inspired e.g. by „The Onion“ in Fisher, Abdi et al. (2007), p.28



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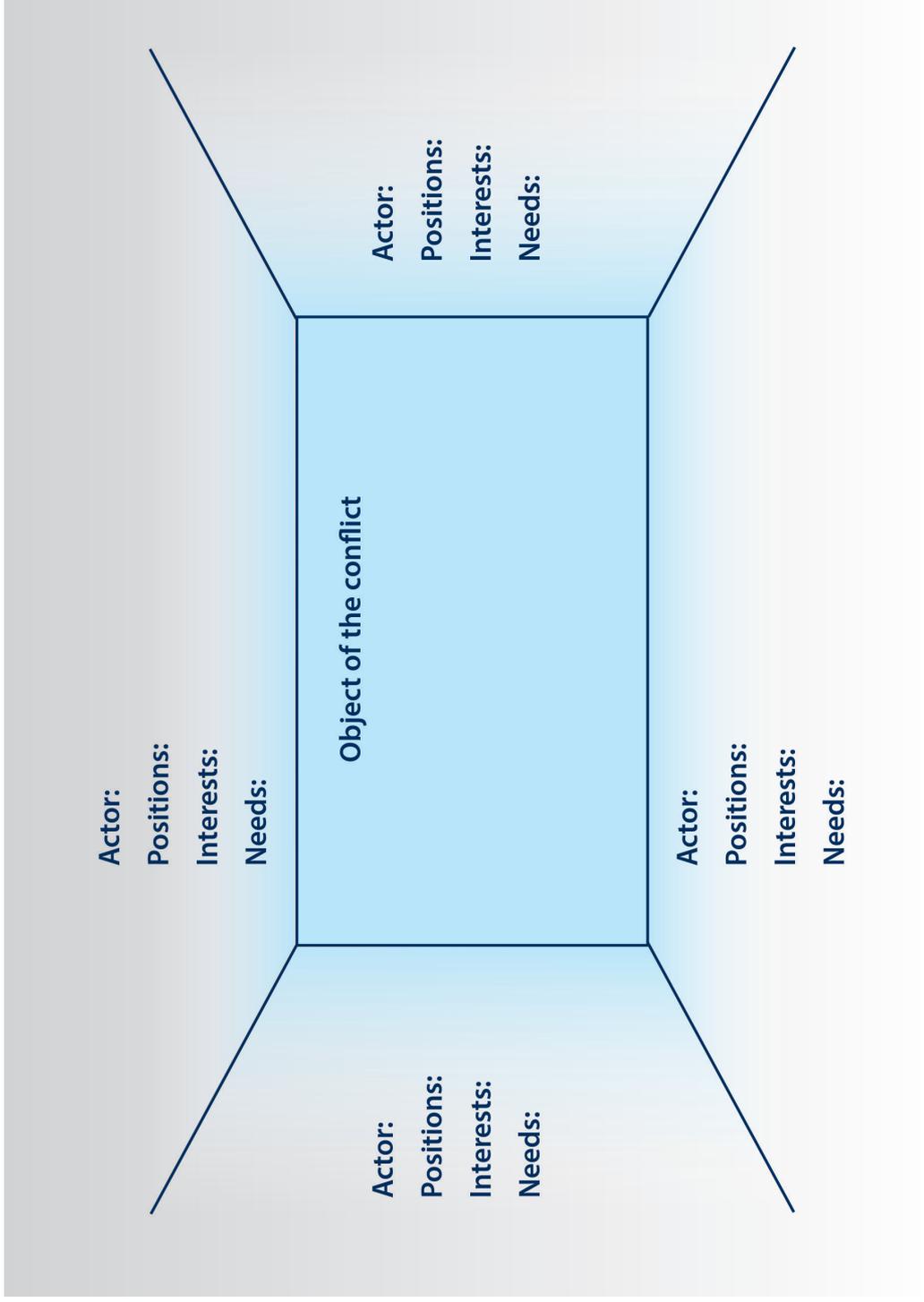
DHBW
Duale Hochschule
Baden-Württemberg
Heidenheim

Clarification of concepts: Values, positions, interests, needs

- **Values** are fundamental orientations that people's actions are based on. They may be ethical principles, cultural norms or rules mandated by religion. Often, values are connected to traditions and are cited for the justification ("explanation") of positions.
- **Positions** are standpoints that are imparted quite formally and often publicly. They are what the person or group advocates or champions. They arise/are formed due to a specific, subjective view of the situation, the conflict and the role of the party involved in the conflict. To justify or legitimise these views, values are often invoked.
- An **interest** is what we call the drive behind the positions. It is often veiled or concealed and should be revealed as part of the management of the conflict. Frequently there are several interests an actor pursues in a given conflict. They are negotiable, and their significance may vary over time. They provide an answer to the question: What does the respective party want?
- **Needs** are fundamental necessities for human survival. They refer to safety, identity, community and possibilities for development. They are non-negotiable but may be fulfilled in different ways. They answer the question: What does the respective party need? They go deeper than interests and frequently, the person in question is not aware of them. Recognising them bears the greatest potential for win-win solutions and cooperation.



Mapping actors and their positions, interests and needs



Each circle symbolises an actor.
Their respective size represents their estimated influence on the conflict and the underlying problem.



A solid line represents a close relationship.



A double line represents an alliance or coalition.



A dotted line represents a weak relationship.



A zigzag line represents a conflict.



If the conflict is violent, a flash symbol is added above the zigzag line.



An arrow symbolises domination/control (criterion: A can issue orders to B).



A triangle represents non-partisan actors, who can contribute to a constructive transformation of the conflict.



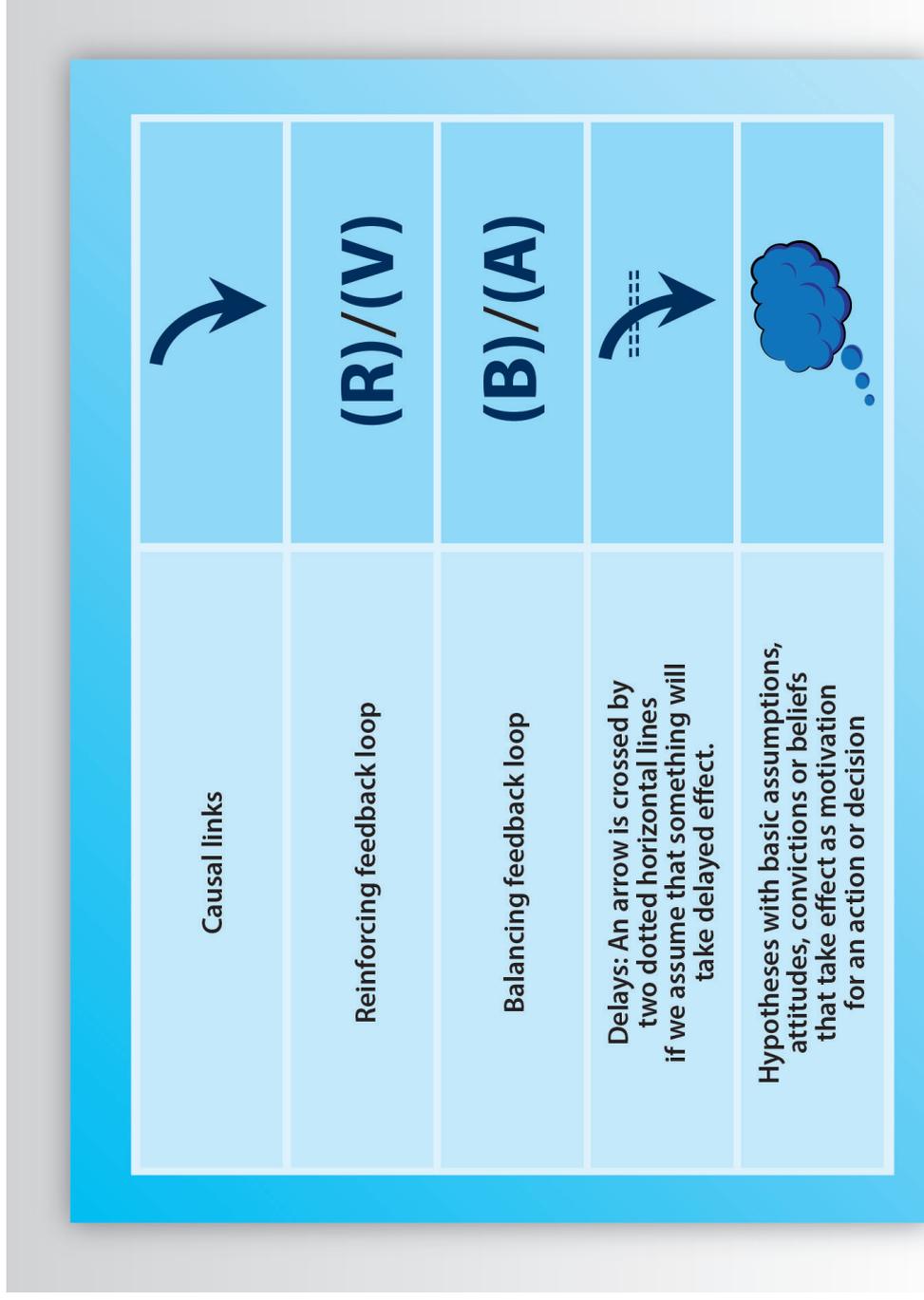
Map of actor relationships:

Depiction of the actors and their relationships within a conflict at a defined point in time.

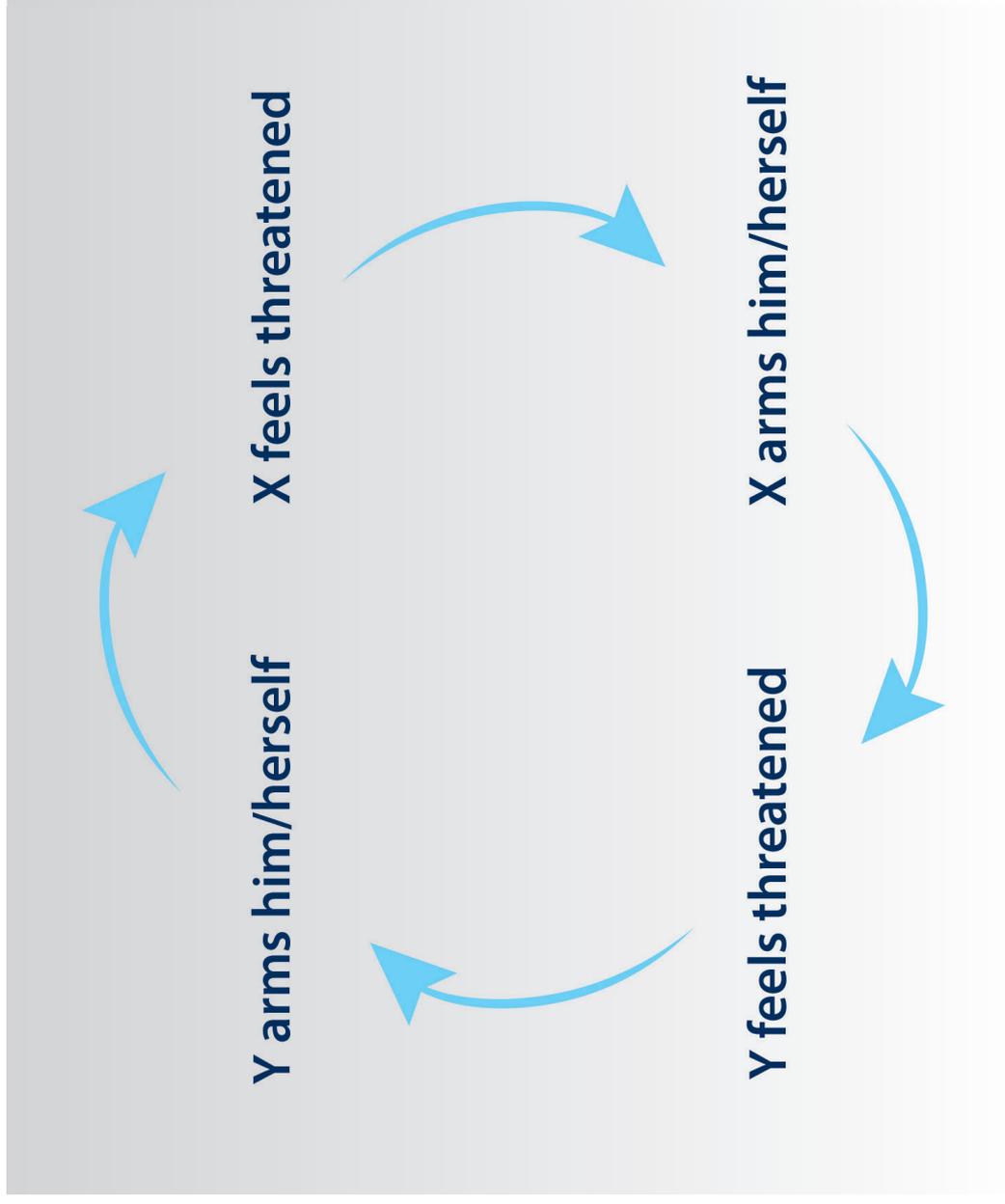
Procedure:

1. Conflict between A and B (central actors) about O (object) at point of time T.
2. Analyse and visualise actors and their relationships.

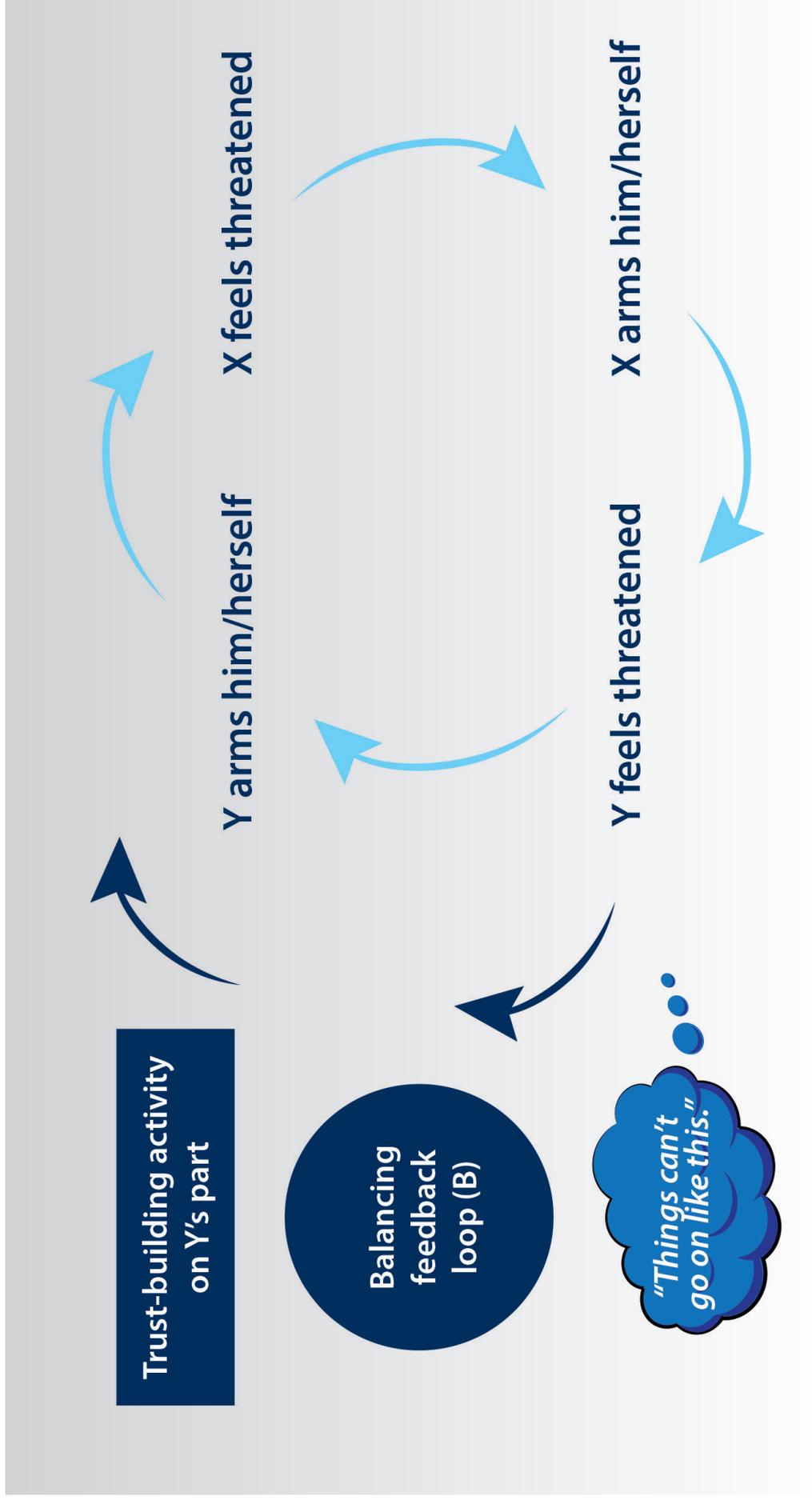
Development of feedback loops



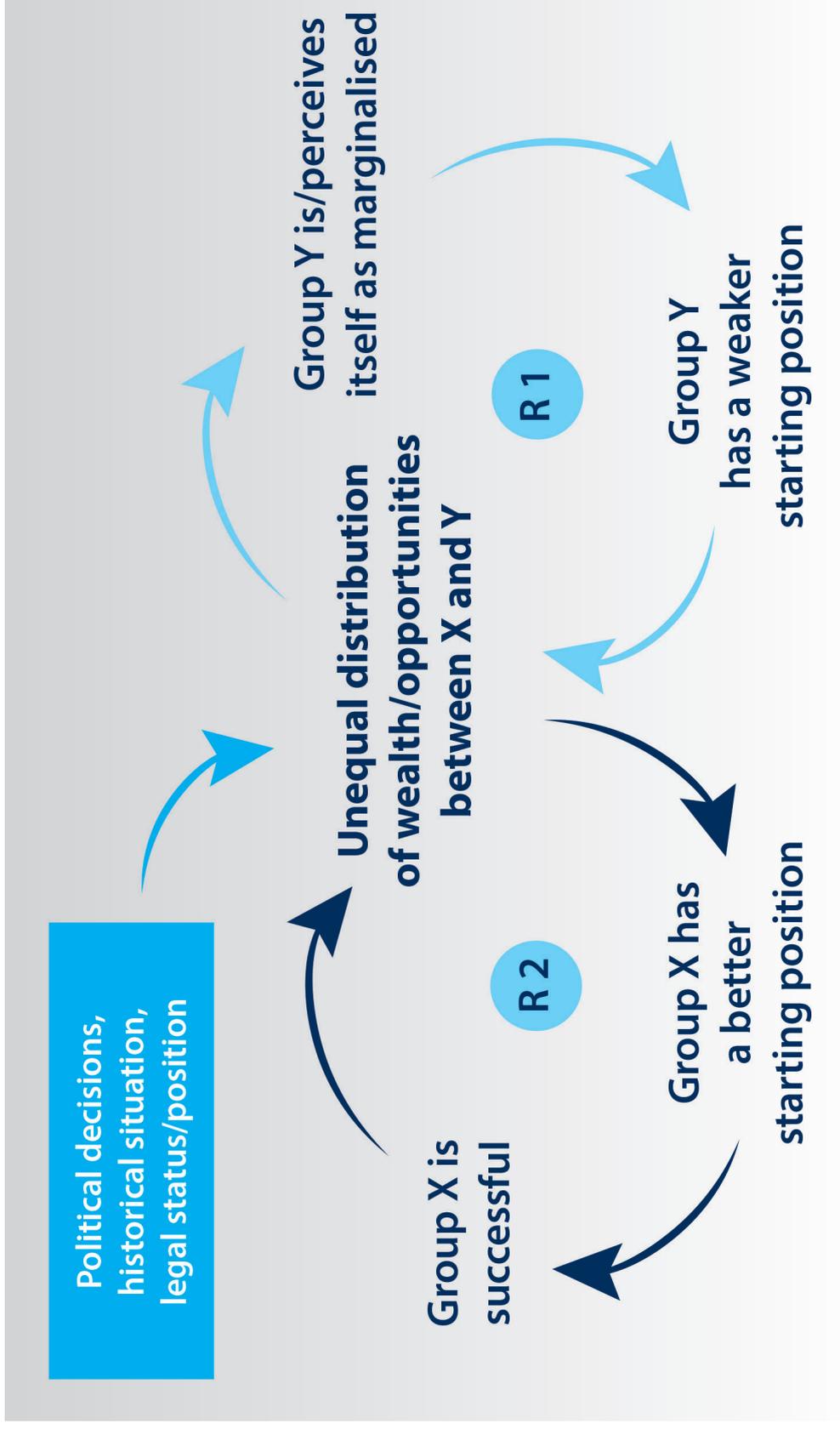
Reinforcing feedback loops



Balancing feedback loops



Interlocking feedback loops





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Module B: Exercise Sheets



Exercise for B-1.3 **Conflicts as an engine of social change**

Reflecting your own experiences with conflict as both opportunity and danger

Think of conflicts you have been involved in and choose a conflict situation where (a more or less conscious) conflict management took place.

Form groups of 3-4 people and tell each other about the respective situation. As a group, answer the following questions for each case:

1. Who were the conflicting parties and what was it about?
2. To what extent did you experience the conflict in that particular situation as an opportunity and to what extent as a danger?
3. What was helpful for a constructive management of the conflict?
4. Did conflict management result in changes in the behaviour, norms or rules of the parties involved?

Write down the results of point 3 for your group for each case.

Module B: Exercise Sheets



Exercise for B-2.2.1

Analysis of positions, interests and needs

Partnered interview on underlying needs

1: Form pairs and interview each other.

The interviewer asks the following questions:

- Which parties and which object are involved in this particular conflict?
- What values, traditions and stories do the conflict parties refer to when they report on the conflict?
- What positions or interests does the respective conflict party hold or have?

The interviewer listens carefully, writes down some notes on the answer.

2: Together, you try to identify the underlying motives the parties involved in the conflict may hold. What needs do the interests and positions expressed point to?

Use the list of needs to help you with this task:

Acceptance	Flexibility	Security
Appreciation	Freedom	Self-determination
Attention	Harmony	Spirituality
Authenticity	Health	Structure
Belonging	Honesty	Support
Calm	Joy of living	Trust
Closeness	Meaning	Understanding
Community	Mindfulness	Variety
Compassion	Movement	
Connectedness	Openness	etc.
Consideration	Pleasure	
Consistency	Protection	
Creativity	Recognition	
Development	Relaxation	
Efficacy	Reliability	
Emotional security	Respect	
Estimation	Responsibility	

Module B: Exercise Sheets



Exercise for B-2.2.3 **Development of feedback loops**

1: Amplifying feedback loop, based on Case Study 2: Westmünsterrode

Step 1:

Form small groups of 5-6 people.

Write one of the following sentences each on a moderation card and prepare several more cards for marking with arrows:

- The local society is divided.
- Teenagers in the neighbourhood organise themselves in gangs committing petty crime.
- People in the neighbourhood are met with suspicion (in shops, when applying for jobs).
- Teenagers have little opportunity for social integration.
- Residents of the neighbourhood perceive themselves as marginalised.
- Police crack down hard on criminals.

Discuss possible connections between the individual elements and mark these connections with arrowed cards.

Step 2:

What concepts of thinking underlie the causal relationships? Write them down on moderation cards that are shaped like clouds and assign them to the respective elements in the cycle.

Module B: Exercise Sheets

2: Supplement with balancing feedback loop

Create balancing feedback loops from the following sentences and add them to the previously developed amplifying feedback loop:

- A street worker is employed to establish contact with young people in the neighbourhood (football matches on the sports ground).
- Street parties and family celebrations are organised in the neighbourhood.
- Intercultural training events for the police force (e.g. Yazidi culture, Islam, etc.).
- Sports clubs focus on supporting young athletes from the neighbourhood.
- Round table with representatives of municipal government and migrants.

3: Linked feedback loops

Create two linked feedback loops from the following elements:

- Religious affiliation is instrumentalised for political mobilisation.
- A political party is looking for a divisive issue.
- Stereotypes, rumours, attributions abound.
- Separation of groups (socially, spatially) and mutual ignorance.
- Fear and suspicion
- The public is mobilised: “concerned citizens”
- Attacks, destabilisation
- Mutual accusations
- Radical groups are formed.
- Radical groups prepare secret actions.

1. Teaching and further education modules

Module C:

**Counselling for the management
of conflicts on the municipal level**

Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

Slides 1 & 2

In local conflict counselling, we take counselling to mean a specific, professional approach for the management of conflicts on the local, municipal level. The goal of this counselling is to develop, together with the local actors, a process of conflict management that is suited to the conflict, the surrounding conditions and the actors. Therefore, all counselling is based on the conceptual ideas on the approach of local conflict counselling delineated in Module A and uses the instruments of conflict management described in Module B.

What is also needed for this type of counselling is a description of the roles of the counsellors, their interaction with the local actors, their counselling and communication skills – which transport the counselling approach – and the instruments they use for this.

Following the fundamental understanding of systemic conflict transformation, the counselling teams are tasked with doing their part to make life in local communities fairer, more just and more peaceful. To fulfil this task,

- they take on different roles in the counselling process, depending on the surrounding conditions and the conflict dynamics that are to be managed;
- they need specific counselling skills and the appropriate set of tools beyond their knowledge of conflict management. This includes strategy development skills, experience with systemic, process-oriented procedures, communication with local actors as well as the ability for self-reflection. Counselling is guided by the question how the encounters and conversations can be designed in such a way that the local actors are enabled to manage their conflicts in accordance with local conflict counselling. This will be described in this module.

Slide 3

Learning objectives:

Participants know the main features of the process-oriented, systemic counselling approach.

Participants know the roles of the conflict counsellors.

Participants are able to appraise the significance of conflict management knowledge in counselling and give reasons for it.

Participants recognise the differences between the expert model and the process model and know where local conflict counselling is situated.

Participants know the competencies local conflict counsellors need and can match them with selected counselling instruments:

- Communication skills
- Self-management and self-reflection
- Further fields of knowledge and competencies

Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

C-1 The counselling approach: systemic and process-oriented

Slide 4

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “counselling” as “The provision of professional assistance and guidance in resolving personal or psychological problems”. While we are concerned with providing assistance, the term ‘guidance’ is more accurate in our context. An essential component of local conflict counselling consists in discussing and negotiating possible ways of dealing with conflicts or areas of tension. The meaning must however be specified. The discussions or consultations are specific, using specific instruments, and their purpose is to offer guidance and support in the management of conflicts: not through giving advice but by organising a constructive systemic process. Assumptions taken from systemic conflict transformation constitute a substantial basis of the understanding of counselling described here. This understanding, which local conflict counselling embodies, follows the focus of systemic conflict transformation:

Slide 5

“The aim [of systemic conflict transformation] is not to maintain or stabilise existing systems but to contribute to their transformation by mobilising the system’s own internal resources. [...] This will help to establish or reinforce support systems that will promote the necessary political and social change towards a peaceful and just society.”²⁹

Following this understanding, local conflict counselling teams are supposed to contribute to making life in municipal societies fairer, more just and more peaceful. To achieve this, in the counselling process counsellors involve local partners and use the instruments of systemic conflict analysis and management elaborated on in Module B.

In local conflict counselling, systemic thinking is not only found in the systemic manner it addresses conflict analysis (with the aid of the joint creation of actor maps or feedback loops), but also in other aspects: in its questioning techniques, in the role and attitude of the counsellor (e.g. how they deal with a changing situation, instead of going through with a fixed plan, etc.).

The use of the conflict management tools presented in Module B here serves both the gain of knowledge about the conflict dynamics and the learning process of the partners, so they can ultimately manage conflicts independently. At the same time, through the engagement with the counsellor’s specific, purposeful questions, the partners are enabled to develop, together with the counselling team, an adequate process for the transformation of “their” conflict. With this form of conflict management, the principal aim of local conflict counselling is to support the actors in their handling of their conflict in the municipal sphere, and in such a way that they can manage it constructively, without use of force or violence, and without (unintended) escalation.

²⁹ Wils, O./Hopp, U./Ropers, N. et al. (2006), p. 13f; English version: https://www.berghoffoundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Other_Resources/SCT_Systemic_Conflict_Transformation_Complete.pdf

Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

Through an assessment and an analysis of the conflict, the counselling team wants to assist with conflict management. This already amounts to an interference with the conflict. In a way, the conflict is managed through the engagement of the counselling team with the local actors: Viewpoints are broadened, culprits and victims are turned into parties involved in a conflict who can influence its course.

Therefore, the counsellors ensure that they themselves play an external, non-partisan role; by no means should they become an actor in the conflict dynamics or take the side of one of the groups involved (cf. Module A). At the same time, they procure that the awareness of the local actors regarding their own potential influence grows. Local conflict counselling surmises that every person who is part of the conflict system or is in close contact with it is also capable of influencing that system. Thus, every actor carries the shared responsibility for shaping the process.

By employing adequate questioning techniques, counsellors exert influence on the actors' conflict-related ways of thinking and acting: If for example the perspective of the partners is governed by recriminations and mutual distrust, that is of little use for the constructive approach to conflicts. The counselling team will provide impetuses to transform this perspective (e.g. by using empathically listening and perspective adoption).

Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

C-2 Tasks and roles of the conflict counsellors

Slide 6

A local conflict counsellor

- belongs to an organisation or a counselling team,
- is an multipartial, external person,
- does not live in the municipality to be counselled, and is not part of its local structures,
- regularly spends time in the municipality for a defined period of time to support the processes,
- ensures through their continuity in the municipality that processes are pursued in a purposeful manner,
- consciously works in a way that keeps track of the entire process (= dissociation from initiatives etc.),
- involves the local actors in the conflict management process,
- transforms the desire for a quick (one-size-fits-all) solution into the development of a custom-fit conflict management process.

Ideally, bringing in local conflict counsellors strengthens the local partners' faith in the possibilities of constructive, cooperative ways of dealing with conflicts. To ensure this, it appears essential that the roles are clearly defined as part of the mandate at the beginning of the process support. The allocation of responsibilities between local actors as "conflict owners" and counsellors as those in charge of the process needs to repeatedly be reviewed in loops throughout the process.

Work as a counsellor for the management of conflicts on a local level is multifaceted and will therefore be outlined in the following, describing different tasks and the attendant roles to approximate what this work looks like in practice.

Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

Strategy development and process organisation

In close contact with the local partners, local conflict counsellors develop a strategy for dealing with the conflict or area of tension. They progressively enable the actors to organise a conflict management process independently. The strategy encompasses goals, sub-goals and measures that are based on the findings of the preceding situation and conflict analyses. At the same time, systemic – as opposed to linear – thinking is applied here, which means for example that the initially developed strategy is constantly adapted and remains part of the negotiation with and between the local actors.

The instruments borrowed from civil-non-violent conflict management are of particular importance in this: The “Do No Harm” method for example helps with a conflict-sensitive organisation of measures without unintended side effects. The “Reflecting on Peace Practice” method assists with reflection and with the visualisation of the potential impact of intended measures. SWOT analyses, which take strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats into account, are employed in strategy development as well, next to evaluations as a management tool, a control instrument of the counselling, a review of the effectiveness of measures, or as an intervention.³⁰



Exercise 18:

Ask the group the following question: “What information do I need as a local conflict counsellor, to select the right strategy for the case at hand?” Have the students formulate suitable questions in small groups.

For instance, the strategy will be governed by the answers to the following questions:

- Who wants the issue dealt with and why now?
- Who is affected by the issue and in what ways?
- Who must (absolutely) be included when dealing with the issue?
- Who might try to hamper or prevent the intervention and for what reason? (i.e. What are their interests?)
- What do the parties involved want to achieve and what can be achieved in the given circumstances?
- What is the suitable procedure to do so?

³⁰ For a brief introduction to their use in local conflict counselling (in German) see: Berndt, H./Lustig, S. (2016), p.98ff.

Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

Slide 7

In the further course of the conflict management process, conflict counsellors assume the following roles:

- Observer and analyser
- Coach and assistant – this implies that they are also always potential initiators/catalysts (or impulse generators, to borrow a technical term)
- Occasionally: consultant or expert adviser, moderator or mediator/facilitator
- In duly justified, exceptional cases: implementer of measures

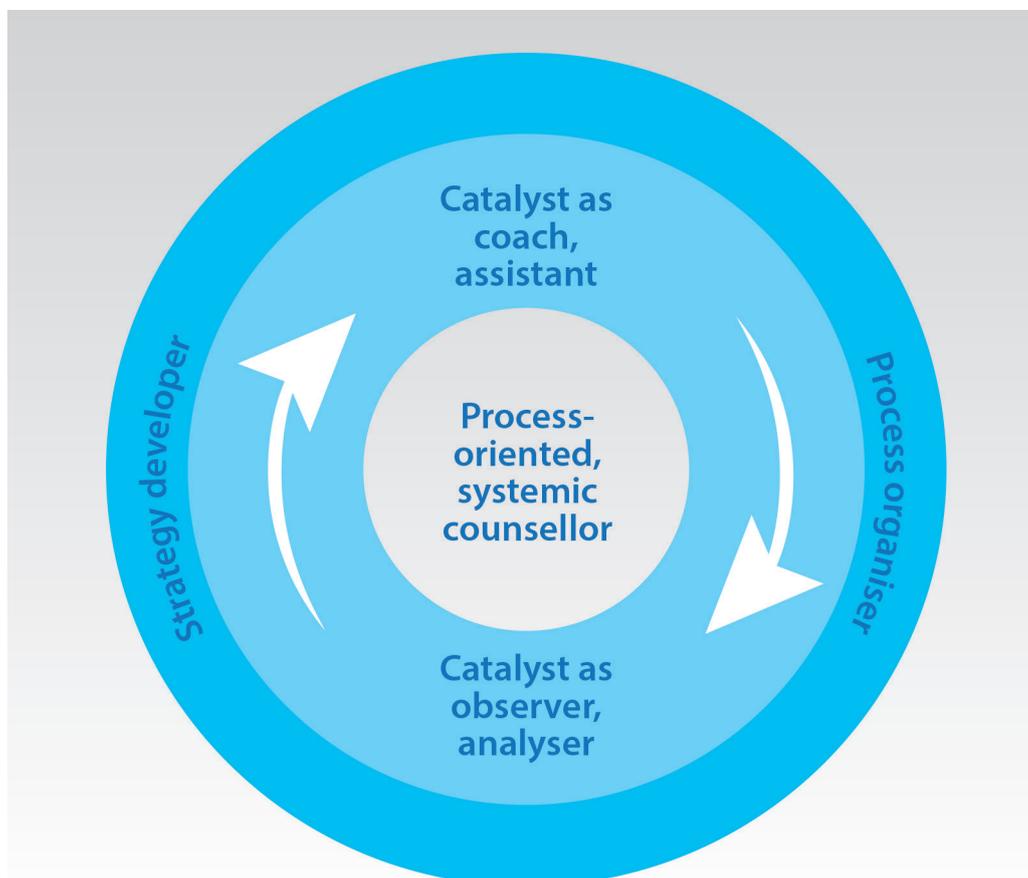


Figure 17: Illustration based on Berndt, H./Lustig, S. (2016), p.56.

Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

The counsellor plays an **observant, analysing role** notably while the analysis of the conflict system is developed. Here, he or she establishes contact with many actors on the ground, to gather and grasp their perspective on things, and to later map the correlations between them. Throughout the process, the counsellor will repeatedly assume this role to take note of new impressions and perspectives, and to integrate them into the process.

Right from the start, the counsellor is also **coach and assistant**: By means of questions and impulses, the counsellor intervenes in the local partners' conflict-related thought and action, influences them, builds confidence and, drawing on the interplay of perspectives and ideas, develops procedures for dealing with the conflict or area of tension in the municipal sphere. The role of coach and assistant describes the relationship with the local actors.

Only in exceptional cases, the counsellor will act as **consultant or expert adviser**: In individual cases and where it is justified, he or she deviates from the usual, process-oriented practice of pointing out ways of managing the issue, and instead recommends a ready-made solution based on his or her expert knowledge. Much in the same way, the actual **implementation** of measures – such as the photo exhibition in Donnenweil (see Case Study 1) – is usually not the counselling team's responsibility. If there is however a shortage of manpower, for example, that would endanger the process of conflict management, the team can step in as an exception – if this has been established as a special case, and the task areas “counselling” and “implementation” do not overlap or intermix.



Exercise 19:

Have the students form groups of at least 5 people each. Then the roles are allocated within each group: There should be one observer, one coach/assistant, one consultant and one implementer in each group, as well as one or more “experts for conceptual questions of local conflict counselling”. One “conceptual expert” would be enough, but this role may be filled twice if the number of participants cannot be divided by 5.

The following discussion should be based on Case Study 1 or 2. Each “role player” expounds on how they would intervene and affect the process. The “conceptual experts” take notes. Next, the group should come to an agreement about how much input from which role owner is compatible with management in line with local conflict counselling.

The results of the groups are then gathered and presented in plenary, offering an opportunity for the instructor to make clear how short-sighted and unrewarding in the long term it can be if they deliver “patent remedies” or pseudo-solutions that are imposed from outside.

Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

C-3 Tools, knowledge and competencies of conflict counsellors

Slide 8

The instruments for conflict management and counselling gathered in this ‘handbook for teaching’ are derived from a variety of fields, such as civilian conflict management, conflict transformation, systemic conversation techniques, organisation development and non-violent communication. In practice, the skills, competencies and knowledge of counsellors will differ greatly. Barely anyone will have mastered all the knowledge and skills mentioned in this handbook, and that is one reason why working in teams is recommended.

Essentially, the conflict counsellor must be capable – in line with systemic approach – of recognising and inquiring after connections and correlations, so they can encourage a reflective process on the part of the conversation partners. They also need experience with the conception, management and implementation of transformation and potential development processes.

In the active organisation and management of the process, improvisation skills are just as indispensable for the conflict counsellor, due to the constantly changing situations and actors.

The conflict counsellors’ knowledge and experience base necessary for successful counselling consist mainly of competencies, knowledge and experience in the field of conflict management and in counselling with a background in process-oriented, systemic modes of working, plus communication skills. Beyond that, know-how in methods of qualitative social research, a basic understanding of how political and administrative structures operate – as well as those of civil society – and thematic expertise on the object of the conflict at hand are all helpful but not viewed as mandatory.

Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

C-3.1 Conflict management expertise as the foundation of counselling

Slide 9

The counsellors' knowledge of conflict management (see Module B) informs their counselling, generates credibility and serves as the basis on which to perform convincing counselling work. What is vital here is that the counsellor pays close attention to when he or she is in danger of slipping into "single-handed" conflict management. In the interests of process orientation, empowerment and sustainability, this is to be avoided.

For their conflict counselling, counsellors use the instruments of conflict management mentioned in Module B in two ways: On the one hand, they pass on knowledge about these instruments to the local actors in the counselling sessions and conversations. On the other hand, they use instruments such as the feedback loops for example to visualise a conflict system for the local actors. That means they do not draw up the feedback loops to use them as a finished product, but as a basis for discussion that serves both their own knowledge gain and the expansion of the local actors' conflict-related ways of thinking and acting.

Thus, a conflict counsellor can apply all the available instruments of conflict management, but they will always do this with the focus on serving the local actors – instead of resolving the conflict themselves. Counsellors also have the ability to support groups in ways that are conducive to connection and clarity: In some cases, they will moderate discussion forums or dialogue processes or, in exceptional cases, offer mediation between parties involved in the conflict. They will only do these things themselves however, if no other suitable person is available and the process would be endangered if they didn't.

The instruments of conflict management presented in Module B were selected with regard to their suitability for process-oriented, systemic counselling. The instruments used in local conflict counselling enable constructive communication and have the potential to be conducive to the transformation of conflicts at the same time. Therefore, internalised conflict management know-how and experience in working with those instruments are the prerequisite for the counsellors' ability to provide impulses that encourage local actors to view the conflict in its systemic dynamics and manage it accordingly.

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C-3.2 Process orientation as the key attitude within the systemic approach

In the following, we look at the underlying orientation and attitude of counselling: the process-oriented mode of work in line with the systemic approach. Here, the counsellor takes responsibility for the process and invites the parties involved to take a systemic perspective when looking at situations and conflicts, before thinking about changes and possibilities for action together. The counsellor thus does not give instructions but offers a process that is continually adapted through joint negotiation and consideration of the situation.

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The goal of counselling is to ensure a process that allows for the management of the conflict by the local actors themselves, and that builds the actors' competence for conflict transformation. It should be kept in mind that this type of counselling does not follow a linear logic. In fact, frequently,

“[...] the predictability of effects the counsellors want to attain is not a given, since the posited interventions meet the self-will of the system, are interpreted in the framework of its inherent logic and thus elude management. In this sense, interventions are merely suggestions or impulses.”³¹

The importance of process-oriented thinking and acting on the part of the counsellors for successful conflict counselling is evidenced in the interaction of counselling team and local partners particularly: The counsellor works towards making sure that the partners on site continue to play an active role and take responsibility for the process of conflict management. The counsellor asks questions and suggests options for conflict management, but does not set any predetermined, recipe-like solution paths (“if A then B”) but develops them with as many of the actors involved as possible, in tune with the circumstances of the respective case.

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To be able to act in a process-oriented manner, what is needed is

1. on the one hand, an awareness of the difference between specialist counselling and process counselling,³² or expert model and process model,³³
2. on the other hand, the knowledge of instruments that are appropriate for the application of process-oriented action (see C-3.3).

³¹ Slupetzky, W. (2002), p. 8f, our translation

³² Cf. Seifert, J. W. (2014)

³³ Hänsel, M. (2014), p. 11f

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Let us here examine process orientation as opposed to specialist counselling or expert counselling:

A counsellor working in a process-oriented manner assists the local partners during the conflict management process and offers suggestions regarding how they can develop their own solutions and what factors must be considered when doing so. The local actors are viewed as on-site experts for handling the situation and, with the help of process counselling, are enabled to tackle and manage their tasks independently.

Fundamental differences between process counselling and expert counselling present themselves in the relationship between local partner and counsellor: Generalising, one can say that with expert counselling, the client or affected person passes the responsibility for their problem and its management to the counsellor, and he or she accepts this assignment or mandate. The counsellors solve the problem or at least they propose concrete solutions. One simple example is repairing a washing machine. Here, I commission a mechanic to repair the washing machine and ideally am not involved in the process.

In process counselling, on the other hand, the task is not the immediate solution of the problem, but the support of the client, so they can solve their problem themselves. In this case, responsibility for the problem remains with the affected person and/or the process counselling client. The counsellor is tasked with organising the process of problem solution. This requires methodological competence above all. Expertise or professional competence comes into play to a lesser extent. The literature on counselling likes to term this hybrid form “process-oriented expert counselling”.³⁴

³⁴ Seifert, J.W. (2014), p. 2.

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Expert model	Process model
Counsellor takes responsibility for diagnosis and solution	Counsellor assists with the development of possible solutions and assumes responsibility for the process of strategy development
Local actors remain dependent on the expert knowledge of the counsellors	Local actors gain knowledge and experience; they become progressively independent of the counsellors
Local actors provide information with the help of which the counsellor develops a solution, which he or she hands over to the local actors or implements him- or herself	Local actors take an active part in the process and manage it together with the counsellor
Counsellor deduces clear-cut interventions from the diagnosis	Counsellor provides impulses, so possible solutions arise in joint reflection; the local actors decide which measures will be helpful
Local actors understand diagnosis and intervention, and are willing to implement the latter	Local actors are motivated by goals, methods and collaboration, and have faith in the process
After counselling, local actors are able to 'function' as requested or required	Local actors have learned to look for causes and know ways of strategy development

Table adapted to local conflict counselling, based on: Hänsel, M. (2014), p. 11



Exercise 20:

Form small groups of 5 to 7 people. Each group gets a set of the individual statements from the above table ("Counsellor assumes responsibility ..."). The students match the statements with the appropriate model. Afterwards, the whole table is presented as an overview, and the matches are compared. Any diverging ideas may be discussed.

The comparison shows clearly: Local conflict counselling requires fundamental methodological competence. In addition, specific expert knowledge is also required, primarily regarding conflict management (Module B). Process orientation is part of systemic conflict management and the principle of this type of counselling. Through the process of conflict counselling itself, the counsellors make it tangible for the local actors and provide them with new options for thinking and acting with regard to dealing with conflicts.

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C-3.3 Communication skills in process-oriented counselling

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The local conflict counsellor cannot manage the conflict alone, nor do they want to. Rather, they need the local partners and the interplay with them to achieve this. To be able to organize this cooperation in such a way that a constructive systemic conflict management becomes possible, communication skills are essential. The fundamental requirement for the conflict counsellor is the ability to put themselves in other people's shoes, to empathise with different people and their professional circumstances. They are capable of understanding the respective "professional logic of action" of other people, and of communicating the attendant ways of thinking, implied expectations and constraints to other involved parties. In this way, they contribute to a common understanding. Ideally, process-oriented counsellors draw on a catalogue of methods that transform/translate this attitude into concrete action: For example, they ask more questions than they give answers; they provide impulses or suggestions to help develop one's own solutions rather than presenting ready-made ones, and they assist the local partners without relieving them of their responsibility. Due to the municipal setting and the great number of actors resulting from that, local conflict counsellors frequently work with or within groups. Therefore, a central instrument of the systemic, process-oriented approach is **moderation**:

"It is characterised by the fact that the counsellors take on the organisation of the scheduled appointment. They

- structure the path that is supposed to lead to the resolution of issues, as regards both content and time;
- they formulate questions that collate the clients' energies in a goal-oriented fashion;
- they monitor the process and organise the design depending on the situational demands,
- etc.

The clients focus fully on working with the content and on resolving their issue."³⁵

In local conflict counselling, the counsellors may employ their moderation or facilitating skills for structuring meetings, workshops or discussion forums.

³⁵ Slupetzky (2002), p. 24, our translation.

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There are situations in local conflict counselling when individuals or groups are supported in ways akin to supervision, in order to foster the conflict management process. Manifold methods and instruments are available for coaching and supervision. We will here introduce three that are quite suitable for systemic, process-oriented work, because they support the awareness of other perspectives and the instruction of how to change perspective.

- **Non-violent communication** offers the “**empathic listening**” model, which enables users to understand the needs of their counterpart and communicate that to them, too. Hereby, the counsellor’s focus lies solely on being able to show empathy for the action-motivating needs of the counterpart and naming them. The point is not to suggest possible solutions or voice one’s own opinion on the issue in question, but to signal to the conversation partner that they are being heard in a neutral, non-judgemental way. When “listening empathically”, the listener adopts a sympathetic attitude towards the conversation partner. That does not mean the positions of the counterpart need be endorsed or accepted. Rather, the counsellor briefly walks in the other person’s shoes, so to speak, in order to see beyond their positions and interests. On the level of their needs, an openness towards dialogue and the suggestions of the counsellor may then develop.³⁶

- **Dialogue techniques** such as

- » **“Circular questions”**

This instrument is meant to help the conversation partner change their perspective and empathise with another person, see things from their point of view. Example questions: What does person A think about person B? How does person A feel if situation X comes to pass? How would person A describe their behaviour in situation X?

The point of circular questioning is not mere information gain, but rather to stimulate one’s counterpart with “open-ended questions” to view a situation from different perspectives.

- » **“Tetralemma”**

The tetralemma is an instrument geared at disrupting conventional thought patterns. Especially in western cultures, the options in decision-making processes consist of “either” and “or”. The tetralemma offers further options that go beyond the two-dimensional view: In this pattern of thinking, there are at least four options for the management of a problem:

- » Position A “The one”
- » Position B “The other”
- » Position C “None of the two”
- » Position D “Both”

³⁶ Rosenberg, M. (2007), p. 24.

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No matter which methods are used, the central question is how helpful they are in serving process-oriented systemic conflict counselling.

The expectations of the communication in local conflict counselling include:

- judgement- and dominance-free communication, which can be achieved by using needs-oriented communication,
- being capable of speaking many different 'languages'/adapting to different audiences
- showing interest in your counterpart,
- building trust,
- pointing out resources,
- participation and empowerment of group.



Exercise 21:

To practise a simplified form of empathic listening with the students, print out several sets of needs after Marshall B. Rosenberg. Form small groups of 3 people each. Ask the students to talk about a situation they are preoccupied with, taking turns. The two remaining members of each group pay attention to the needs of the person telling them about the situation, as they appear in the telling. They collect the correspondent cards. After about 5 minutes, the teller gets the needs cards and shares his or her thoughts on them with the rest of the group. He or she decides which needs fit. Then it is the next person's turn.

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C-3.4 Self-management and self-reflection of local conflict counsellors

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A conflict counsellor is, by definition, constantly in contact with areas of tension or conflicts in his or her work, and with people who are looking for speedy help, a quick fix. That is however not what local conflict counselling offers, which is why counsellors, too, may experience strong emotions, such as frustration, fear or anger. Another essential demand counsellors must meet is therefore the management of their own feelings and needs. This may require options that promote relaxation or soothe strong emotions. There are lots of available methods, such as exercises from autogenic training, progressive muscle relaxation after Jacobson or the application of self-empathy from non-violent communication after Rosenberg. To avoid accidentally getting into strong emotions and conflicts with conversation partners or groups, self-reflection on one's own patterns is also essential for every counsellor.

In addition, within the systemic approach, the counsellor is an external observer of the conflict system on the one hand, but on the other, this observation results from his or her subjective perception. Maturana described this oscillation between the perspectives using the metaphor of the “double vision”³⁷. The counsellor will thus not just observe the conflict system, but at the same time, they will reflect and question their observation of this observation, and with that, their own implied concepts, motifs and theories; and subsequently make them available for discourse and possible change, too. Recognising gaps in their own knowledge and formulating them as questions is part of this as well.

Here, coaching on a regular basis is of essential assistance to counsellors. Ideally, this is done by a person conversant in local conflict counselling who, with the help of various methods, assists the counsellors' reflection, supports them on both the personal and conceptual level, encourages new ideas and thus helps them constantly adapt their procedures to the circumstances, and stick to a systemic and process-oriented way of working at the same time.

³⁷ Maturana, H. (1996), quoted from Hänsel, M. (2014), p. 12.

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C-3.5 Additional helpful competencies and fields of knowledge

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- **Data collection based on qualitative methods of social research:**

The development of a conflict analysis comes with the need to conduct interviews and interpret them. For that, it is useful to possess guided interview know-how. For the interpretation and evaluation, experience with interpretive social research are also helpful, for example to know how to distinguish clearly between different points of view, build suitable categories and correlate the actors' perspectives and actions in a non-judgmental manner.

- **An understanding of the functional principles of political and administrative structures, as well as those of civil society:**

Local conflict counsellors work within the framework of regulations and processes of local politics, the structures of local government and civil society. To effectively place the conflict management strategy in a municipality or an administrative district, it is useful to have a fundamental idea of entrenched processes, to be able to recognise where the local partners can exert influence and where they can't. This includes for example awareness of the necessity of formulating draft resolutions or of coordinating the use of budgetary resources in the council early enough, or knowledge of the jurisdictions in the federal system of Germany.

- **Thematic expertise regarding the object of the conflict in question (e.g. immigration and integration):**

The implementation of specialist measures such as an intercultural training or an anti-bias workshop is not the counsellor's responsibility. Part of their job however is to suggest such trainings or specialist counselling within the process of conflict counselling. To provide the best possible support, it is therefore helpful if the counsellor is conversant with measures suitable for the object of the conflict (e.g. overall conditions and support options for the integration of people from Eastern Europe).

Simulation exercises: Initial interview between mayor and counsellor



Plan approximately 90 minutes for the simulation. To let as many participants as possible assume the role of the counsellor, you can offer the observing participants the chance to replace the counsellor or the mayor in the course of the interview. Both the counsellor and the mayor can also ask to be replaced. This allows for a demonstration of different counselling styles.

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Source: seminar at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW)



Exercise 22/ simulation 1: Wilfritsberg – case study and simulation of a counselling situation (an actual case from local conflict counselling, portrayed with details changed)

Participants prepare for their respective roles (mayor or counsellor; each for themselves or in small groups). The simulation then takes place in plenary, with the rest of the students as observers. Conferencing and evaluation take place in plenary.

In the autumn of 2015, it was decided that a central refugee accommodation with space for roughly 400 people would be opened in the small town of Wilfritsberg in the spring of 2016. Criticism was voiced at town meetings, expressed in a relatively calm manner, but clearly revealing the rejective stance of a portion of the population.

There are segments of the citizenry whose attitudes are hostile towards refugees. This group shares the opinion that they are speaking for the whole population. The reasons for their rejection of refugees are mostly based on rumours and generalisations. In contrast, only very few personal and explicitly negative experiences, convictions and prejudices are voiced by this group. Examples:

- "Refugees can ride public transport for free."
- "Their shoplifting offenses cannot be prosecuted."
- "Here in Wilfritsberg, Germans have already been forced to vacate their flats to accommodate refugees."
- "Refugees don't want to work, but if they do, Germans will lose their jobs."
- "All over Germany, (Muslim) refugees harass and molest women in changing rooms of gyms; there have been lots of complaints."
- "You cannot trust the police if they say crime rates haven't gone up, because they have orders from up high and are told to hide things from the public."
- "We were unemployed after the turnaround and had to apply for Hartz IV (i.e., in effect, welfare). Nobody helped us either."

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A few months earlier, a private organisation had offered an anti-racism education project, but for organisational reasons, the event had to be postponed.

The city of Wilfritsberg is partner in a counselling project for local conflict counselling. The counsellor has an office in the town hall. Its purpose is the prevention of violence.

The mayor of Wilfritsberg has sent the counsellor a note, asking her to announce the new date for the project event to the local clubs and associations, and enlist support. The organisation wants to perform a programme to combat anti-Islamic racism, which they prepared with artists from Munich and conduct in various cities. The mayor supports the programme and makes a hall in the city hall available for it.

Questions:

- How should the counsellor react to this?
- How is the mayor's attitude expressed?

Simulation:

Enact the interview between mayor and counsellor.



Source: seminar at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW)

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Exercise23/ simulation 2: Moritzthal – case study and simulation (an actual case from local conflict counselling, portrayed with details changed)

For the following simulation, you provide one group of students with the role description for the counselling team and the other with the role description for the mayor. Neither group has seen the other's description, and they prepare separately.

Role description for the mayor of Moritzthal:

The mayor says that a refugee accommodation with a capacity of up to 60 refugees is to be established; the conversion of an old school building has already begun. According to rumours trickled down from the district administration, the arrival of the first bus of newcomers is planned in precisely two weeks. A town meeting was just held, with the local head of police, the district administrator and the mayor sitting on the podium, and the pastor moderating. The mayor reports that there were very different voices from the audience of local inhabitants. Some want to welcome the refugees, and one family even wants to host a family with children. Others warned that soon enough women and girls will no longer be able to venture out at night. The district administrator then added that the town needs to be prepared for a significantly higher number of refugees than had previously been announced. They will be mainly single men. The mayor deems it a success that the town meeting went down without violence. There is a group of about 160 volunteers (primarily new residents in the municipality), who prepare for welcoming and integrating the refugees. The mayor is worried however that, when the refugees arrive, Pegida followers ('Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident') and extreme right-wingers could mobilise or even set the accommodation on fire. A former Pegida board member wrote him a letter saying he had better be careful and watch his back. The local AfD leader (Alternative for Germany, right-wing populist party) lives in the exclusive residential area near the projected refugee accommodation. She recently had her garden fence raised and a security camera installed.

The mayor feels left in the lurch by all parties, under pressure from extreme right-wing circles, who might also mobilise in a nearby major city. In addition, he feels that the district administrator made him look like a fool, and that he has not been sufficiently briefed or informed on what will happen. He feels responsible for all groups and factions in town and wants to be everybody's mayor.

He would like to have a solution for the upcoming situation of the arrival of the first busload of refugees, but at the same time, he knows that there cannot be such a quick solution, and the challenges will remain with him and the town for the time being.

Role description for the counselling team:

You are local conflict counsellors for a specialist organisation for local conflict counselling. The mayor of Moritzthal has requested your assistance; he needs counselling for a conflict about a refugee accommodation. Today, after his brief phone call, you will meet him in person for the first time. You introduce him to the way you conduct your work as counsellors. You listen to the mayor's concern and record the relevant aspects.

Appendix for Module C: Presentations and Exercise Sheets

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Module C: Counselling for the management of conflicts on the municipal level

Contents

C-1 The counselling approach: systemic and process-oriented

C-2 Tasks and roles of the conflict counsellors

C-3 Tools, knowledge and competencies of conflict counsellors

- C-3.1 Conflict management expertise as the foundation of counselling
- C-3.2 Process orientation as the key attitude of the systemic approach
- C-3.3 Communication skills in process-oriented counselling
- C-3.4 Self-management and self-reflection of local conflict counsellors
- C-3.5 Additional useful competencies and fields of knowledge

Learning objectives

- You know the main features of the process-oriented, systemic counselling approach.
- You know the roles of the conflict counsellors.
- You are able to appraise the significance of conflict management knowledge in counselling and give reasons for it.
- You recognise the differences between the expert model and the process model and know where local conflict counselling is situated.
- You know the competencies local conflict counsellors need and can match them with selected counselling instruments:
 - » Communication skills
 - » Self-management and self-reflection
 - » Further fields of knowledge and competencies



The counselling approach: systemic and process-oriented -1-

- Counselling as interview, conversation
- Discussing and negotiating possible ways of dealing with conflicts or areas of tension
- Purpose: assistance and support for conflict management
- Means: organising a constructive systemic process

The counselling approach: systemic and process-oriented -2-

The understanding of counselling that local conflict counselling embodies follows the orientation of systemic conflict transformation:

- The aim is not to maintain or stabilise existing systems.
- The aim is
 - » to contribute to their transformation by mobilising the system's own internal resources.
 - » to help establish or reinforce support systems that will promote the necessary political and social change.
 - » to contribute to making coexistence in communities more peaceful and just.
 - » to support the actors in dealing with their local conflict, so they are enabled to manage it in constructive ways, without resorting to violence and without unintended escalation.

A local conflict counsellor

- belongs to an organisation or a counselling team,
- is a multipartial, external person,
- does not live in the municipality to be counselled, and is not part of its local structures,
- regularly spends time in the municipality for a defined period of time to support the processes,
- ensures through their continuity in the municipality that processes are pursued in a purposeful manner,
- consciously works in a way that keeps track of the entire process (= dissociation from initiatives etc.),
- involves the local actors in the conflict management process,
- transforms the desire for a quick (one-size-fits-all) solution into the development of a custom-fit management process.



Tasks and roles of local conflict counsellors

- Strategy developer and process organiser
- Impulse generator as
 - » observer and analyser
 - » coach and assistant
- Occasionally: consultant, expert adviser, moderator or facilitator
- In duly justified, exceptional cases: implementer of measures

Tools, knowledge and competencies **of conflict counsellors**

- Conflict management competency
- Conflict counselling competency including
 - » experience in process-oriented, systemic counselling
 - » communication skills
 - » self-reflection and self-management
- Further skills:
 - » methods of qualitative social research
 - » basic understanding of how political and administrative structures operate
 - » thematic expertise on the object of the conflict

Conflict management expertise as the foundation of counselling

Instruments of conflict management are employed in conflict counselling in two ways.

Counsellors

1. pass on knowledge about these instruments to the local actors in the counselling sessions and conversations.
2. use instruments such as the feedback loops for example to visualise a conflict system for the local actors.
 - » They thus allow the involved parties to recognise connections between actors and their actions, or their own options for influencing the conflict dynamics.
3. Together with the local actors, they apply the instruments for conflict transformation
 - » A conflict counsellor can apply all the available instruments of conflict management, but they will always do this with the focus on serving the local actors – instead of resolving the conflict themselves



Process orientation as the key attitude of the systemic approach -1-

The goal of counselling is to ensure a process that allows for the management of the conflict by the local actors themselves, and that builds the actors' competence for conflict transformation.

- Process-oriented counselling does not follow a linear logic.
- “[...] the predictability of effects the counsellors want to attain is not a given, since the posited interventions meet the self-will of the system, are interpreted in the framework of its inherent logic and thus elude management. In this sense, interventions are merely suggestions or impulses.” (Slupetzky 2002, p. 8f)

Process orientation as the key attitude of the systemic approach -2-

To be able to act in a process-oriented manner, what is needed is

- an awareness of the difference between specialist counselling and process counselling (cf. Seifert, J.W. 2014), or expert model and process model (cf. Hänsel, M. 2014),
- the knowledge of instruments that are appropriate for the application of process-oriented action.

Process orientation as the key attitude of the systemic approach -3-

Expert model	Process model
Counsellor assumes responsibility for diagnosis and solution	Counsellor assists with the development of possible solutions and assumes responsibility for the process of strategy development
Local actors remain dependent on the expert knowledge of the counsellors	Local actors gain knowledge and experience; they become progressively independent of the counsellors
Local actors provide information with the help of which the counsellor develops a solution, which he or she hands over to the local actors or implements him- or herself	Local actors take an active part in the process and manage it together with the counsellor
Counsellor deduces clear-cut interventions from the diagnosis	Counsellor provides impulses, so possible solutions arise in joint reflection; the local actors decide which measures will be helpful
Local actors understand diagnosis and intervention, and are willing to implement the latter	Local actors are motivated by goals, methods and collaboration, and have faith in the process
After counselling, local actors are able to 'function' as requested or required	Local actors have learned to look for causes and know ways of strategy development

Table adapted to local conflict counselling, based on: Hänsel, M. (2014), p. 11

Communication skills **in process-oriented counselling -1-**

- Non-violent communication with „empathic listening“ after M.B. Rosenberg
- Discussion techniques such as
 - » Solution-oriented questions, e.g. „circular questions“
 - » „Tetralemma“

Criterion for the use of any method:

how helpful is it for transforming process orientation and the systemic approach into action?

Communication skills **in process-oriented counselling -2-**

Expectations of the communication in local conflict counselling:

- Judgment- and dominance-free communication, which can be achieved by using needs-oriented communication,
- Being capable of speaking many different 'languages'/adapting to different audiences
- Showing interest in your counterpart,
- Building trust,
- Pointing out resources,
- Participation and empowerment of group.

Self-management and self-reflection of local conflict counsellors

- Management of their own feelings and needs
- Self-reflection of their own reaction patterns
- Observation of the conflict system and simultaneous reflection of this observation and its implied concepts, motives and theories
- Recognising gaps in their own knowledge and formulating them as questions
- Assistance through supervision and coaching is essential



Additional helpful competencies and fields of knowledge

- Data collection based on qualitative methods of social research
- An understanding of the functional principles of political and administrative structures, as well as those of civil society
- Thematic expertise regarding the object of the conflict in question (e.g. immigration and integration)





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Module C: Exercise Sheets



Exercise for C-1

The counselling approach: systemic and process-oriented

Roles of conflict counsellors

Form groups of 5-7 members. Choose one of the two case studies from the appendix.

Within the groups, distribute the following roles:

1. an observer or analyst,
2. a coach or supporter,
3. a specialist consultant
4. an implementer
5. one or more „expert well-versed in conceptual questions of local conflict counselling“

Clarify the roles within each group if there are any remaining questions. (5 mins)

Roles 1-4 start a fictitious discussion about the management of the selected case. Each of them uses their assigned role to propose activities for the management of the case and justify them with suitable arguments. (10 mins)

The “experts on conceptual questions” connect all contributions to the “ideal” of local conflict counselling: Which action is conceptually justifiable? Which role should be employed to what extent, according to conceptual considerations?

Based on the roleplay exercise you just went through, discuss which input from which roles is helpful for the management of the case in the spirit of local conflict counselling. (20 mins)

Formulate three key insights that you then present in plenary. (10 mins)

Module C: Exercise Sheets



Exercise for C-3.4

Self-management and self-reflection for local conflict counsellors

1: Simulation of a counselling situation in the Wilfritsberg case

Form groups of 4-6 people.

Read the following case description and discuss anything that is not clear. (10 mins)

The Case:

In the autumn of 2015, it was decided that a central refugee accommodation with space for roughly 400 people would be opened in the small town of Wilfritsberg in the spring of 2016. It falls into the jurisdiction of the district, on behalf of the federal state. Criticism was voiced at town meetings, expressed in a relatively calm manner, but clearly revealing the rejective stance of a portion of the population.

There are segments of the citizenry whose attitudes are hostile towards refugees. This group shares the opinion that they are speaking for the whole population. The reasons for their rejection of refugees are mostly based on rumours and generalisations. In contrast, only very few personal and explicitly negative experiences, convictions and prejudices are voiced by this group. Examples:

- “Refugees can ride public transport for free.”
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- “Here in Wilfritsberg, Germans have already been forced to vacate their flats to accommodate refugees.”
- “Refugees don’t want to work, but if they do, Germans will lose their jobs.”
- “All over Germany, (Muslim) refugees harass and molest women in changing rooms of gyms; there have been lots of complaints.”
- “You cannot trust the police if they say crime rates haven’t gone up, because they have orders from up high and are told to hide things from the public.”
- “We were unemployed after the turnaround and had to apply for Hartz IV (i.e., in effect, welfare). Nobody helped us either.”

A few months earlier, a private organisation had offered an anti-racism education project, but for organisational reasons, the event had to be postponed.

The city of Wilfritsberg is partner in a counselling project for local conflict counselling. The counsellor has an office in the town hall. Its purpose is the prevention of violence.

Module C: Exercise Sheets

The mayor of Wilfritsberg has sent the counsellor a note, asking her to announce the new date for the project event to the local clubs and associations, and enlist support. The organisation wants to perform a programme to combat anti-Islamic racism, which they prepared with artists from Munich and conduct in various cities. The mayor supports the programme and makes a hall in the city hall available for it.

Discuss the following questions in your group: (15 mins)

- How could the counselling team respond to this in accordance with the concept of local conflict counselling?
- How can the attendant attitude be conveyed to the mayor?

Plenary simulation: (30-45 mins)

Arrange four chairs around a table and form a seating circle around this arrangement.

Distribute the roles for beginning the counselling interview.

Start a simulated conversation between the mayor and the counselling team, during which the team presents different possible courses of action.

The characters can indicate that they want to be replaced at any time, and the observers can indicate their willingness to replace them at any time, too.

Module C: Exercise Sheets



Exercise for C-3.4

Self-management and self-reflection of local conflict counsellors

2: Simulation of a counselling situation in the Moritzthal case using two role descriptions

(a) You have taken the **role of the mayor**. Now read your role description and discuss it within the group of those who have taken on the same role. The role description of the other group is unknown to you.

Role description for the mayor of Moritzthal:

The mayor says that a refugee accommodation with a capacity of up to 60 refugees is to be established; the conversion of an old school building has already begun. According to rumours trickled down from the district administration, the arrival of the first bus of newcomers is planned in precisely two weeks. A town meeting was just held, with the local head of police, the district administrator and the mayor sitting on the podium, and the pastor moderating. The mayor reports that there were very different voices from the audience of local inhabitants. Some want to welcome the refugees, and one family even wants to host a family with children. Others warned that soon enough women and girls will no longer be able to venture out at night. The district administrator then added that the town needs to be prepared for a significantly higher number of refugees than had previously been announced. They will be mainly single men. The mayor deems it a success that the town meeting went down without violence. There is a group of about 160 volunteers (primarily new residents in the municipality), who prepare for welcoming and integrating the refugees. The mayor is worried however that, when the refugees arrive, Pegida followers ('Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident') and extreme right-wingers could mobilise or even set the accommodation on fire. A former Pegida board member wrote him a letter saying he had better be careful and watch his back. The local AfD leader (Alternative for Germany, right-wing populist party) lives in the exclusive residential area near the projected refugee accommodation. She recently had her garden fence raised and a security camera installed.

The mayor feels left in the lurch by all parties, under pressure from extreme right-wing circles, who might also mobilise in a nearby major city. In addition, he feels that the district administrator made him look like a fool, and that he has not been sufficiently briefed or informed on what will happen. He feels responsible for all groups and factions in town and wants to be everybody's mayor.

He would like to have a solution for the upcoming situation of the arrival of the first busload of refugees, but at the same time, he knows that there cannot be such a quick solution, and the challenges will remain with him and the town for the time being.

Module C: Exercise Sheets



Exercise for C-3.4

Self-management and self-reflection of local conflict counsellors

Simulation of a counselling situation in the Moritzthal case using two role descriptions

(b) You have taken the **role of a counsellor**. Now read your role description and discuss it within the group of those who have taken on the same role. The role description of the other group is unknown to you.

Role description for the counselling team:

You are local conflict counsellors for a specialist organisation for local conflict counselling. The mayor of Moritzthal has requested your assistance; he needs counselling for a conflict about a refugee accommodation. Today, after his brief phone call, you will meet him in person for the first time. You introduce him to the way you conduct your work as counsellors. You listen to the mayor's concern and record the relevant aspects.

2. Case Studies

Case Study 1:

A preventive conflict counselling in the city of Donnenweil

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

1. First counselling loop

1.1 Background and initial contact

The first meeting between the counselling team and the mayor of Donnenweil, Mr. Smith, took place on the occasion of a peace rally in Donnenweil. This was where Mr. Smith first voiced his request for counselling. The cause was the situation in the local park, where increasingly residents were meeting to party in the evening.

The mayor had heard from several people that there might be potential for conflict between those partying and people living in the neighbourhood of the park, regarding noise disturbance and rubbish, but also a reduced sense of security on the part of the townspeople. The accusation that persons with migrant background were playing a causal role in this conflict was hanging in the air.

Achieved counselling goals of initial contact:

Mayor is interested in counselling, and a first conflict field has been identified from his perspective.

1.2 Clarifying expectations, preliminary examination & counselling mandate

For the counselling process, Mayor Smith delegated responsibility within the municipality and put the integration commissioner in charge. A steering committee was formed, consisting of members of the departments “Family and Social Affairs” and “Public Order and Safety”, as well as representatives of police force and community social work. Different potentials for conflict and conflict situations were collected and discussed, across authorities and professions. The participants described their view of the goings-on in the municipal park and the measures implemented so far, which in their opinion were just starting to take effect. The services of community social work had been extended to include the park, and the public order office (“Ordnungsamt”) had hired new staff for patrolling. The cooperation of the two professions had been instituted in the form of regular personal exchange.

Since the organisation whose assistance was requested was still developing local conflict counselling, at this time, no fully formulated counselling process existed yet. No formal preliminary examination took place. The assessment of the situation was conducted in various meetings with the steering committee. The next step, agreed upon with the committee, was that the counselling team should perform a situation and conflict analysis for selected neighbourhoods in the city.

Achieved counselling goals:

Local parties recognise their different perspectives on the conflict-in-progress in their city and the different priorities regarding its management. The municipal park is now one territorial conflict area among others.

Case Study 1: A preventive conflict counselling in the city of Donnenweil

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

1.3 Situation and conflict analysis & counselling during implementation

The counselling team suggested conducting interviews with the actors who were involved in the local conflicts and their management, and marking neighbourhoods and streets with perceived potential for conflict. The local partners and the counselling team agreed on focusing their analysis on the Altbach and Neubach neighbourhoods. Conflict counsellor Mr. Patience began his work. In these neighbourhoods with potential for conflict, Mr. Patience conducted extensive guided interviews with relevant actors such as the social workers and policemen and -women, employees of the public order office, representatives of migrant self-organisations and residents of the neighbourhoods, as well as youths with and without migrant background in the locations identified as territorial conflict areas. Frequently, an interview partner pointed out further potential interviewees. The counselling team also observed the goings-on in both neighbourhoods at different times of the day. In none of the locations, they were able to observe violent or safety-endangering forms of settling conflicts. Even late at night, when counsellors visited the locations alone or in pairs, they did not feel unsafe. On the weekend, groups of youths would gather, also spending some time in the park or on the steps of public buildings on warm days and consuming beverages. In the early morning, rubbish and empty bottles were found in two locations before the road cleaners did show up.

The result of the situation analysis was that there were no concrete, escalated conflicts, but several areas of tension with potential for conflict. On the one hand, the issue was diverging ideas of urban life and use of public spaces, as well as quiet times (curfew). On the other hand, what needed attention was the peaceful coexistence in a neighbourhood that had made no provisions for meeting places and spaces for youths.

Achieved counselling goals:

Conflicts were discussed without pointing fingers at specific population groups. Evaluation of the situation for the prevention of conflict escalation: The members of the steering committee created an overview of the measures and possibilities for action regarding tensions and potential for conflict. These included for example: establishing youth halls or rooms in the quarter, putting up reverse vending machines for deposit bottles, coordinating the offers and services of youth work in the quarter, ensuring direct communication between community social work and public order office, creating opportunities for participation in the street life for residents neighbouring public spaces.

Case Study 1: A preventive conflict counselling in the city of **Donnenweil**

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

1.4 Action plan with recommendation for actions

On the basis of the analysis of areas of tension, Mr. Patience suggested recommendations for action for the development of a conflict management process, which considered and included the measures mentioned above. In a one-day workshop on dialogic validation, they were discussed with the interviewees, the members of the steering committee and further relevant actors from the neighbourhoods in question. Subsequently, the revised version with recommendations for action based on the insights gained in the workshop was discussed within the steering committee, finalised and published. Afterwards, the members of the steering committee and the counselling team discussed the potential for conflict and need for action regarding the areas of tension in **Donnenweil**. Here, the following conflicts and potential conflicts came into view:

1. Potential for conflict in connection with the urban renewal of the ‘Himmelgasse’ area : The houses in the neighbourhood around Himmelgasse had been refurbished or undergone structural restoration. Tenants who had been living in subsidised housing in this quarter were offered new flats in different parts of the city. Of the newly remodelled flats, fewer are suitable for large families than before. A portion of the flats were sold as freehold flats. Few families returned after the refurbishment. The municipality’s idea with the measure had been to mix tenants living in subsidised housing with flat owners in one neighbourhood. The pending task was to flank the redevelopment with social measures for the prevention of conflict escalation. Potential for conflict in the neighbourhood existed in the clash of different lifestyles on the one hand, and on the other in the lack of offers and their coordination, as well as the lack of rooms or spaces for youths, where they could meet without bothering other residents.
2. The problems described by Mayor Smith: noise disturbance and rubbish in the municipal park (as mentioned in 1.1 Background and initial contact).
3. An existing conflict between municipality, night club operators and patrons, and neighbours about quiet and cleanliness in the surroundings of a local club.
4. Potential for conflict between residents about how to deal with migrant self-organisations, regarding transparency and acceptance.

In the discussion of those four areas of conflict, it became clear that only one of the identified areas of tension was eligible for counselling, namely No. 1, “urban renewal in Himmelgasse”. The steering committee did not see any application potential for local conflict counselling for the areas 2 to 4. In the municipal park, the initial area of tension (No. 2)), measures had already been implemented by community social work and public order office. According to the members of the steering committee, there was no further need for action. The conflict between night-club operators and neighbours (No. 3) was currently being dealt with in court, and they did not want to enter extra-judicial conflict management parallel to that.

The different treatment of migrant organisations by parts of the local population was deemed unmanageable by the parties involved. Hence, the decision was made that local conflict counselling would be dedicated to the potential for conflict related to “urban renewal in Himmelgasse”.

Case Study 1:

A preventive conflict counselling in the city of Donnenweil

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

Achieved counselling goals:

Debate of the identified areas of tension across authorities and decision to put in further work in a defined local space with its specific potential for conflict.



When doing conflict counselling work, we treat the counselling recipients as partners. Consequently, they have the final say in selecting the conflicts they want to manage. This means: The counsellors may need to accept that certain areas of conflict will not be considered in the further process.

2. Second counselling loop

2.1 Intermediate evaluation & redefinition of the mandate

Counselling had now been focused on the area of tension in the “Himmelgasse” quarter. For the management of the potential for conflict, the old steering committee was disbanded, and a new steering body was founded. The conflict counselling team worked with representatives of the department “Family and Social Affairs” and the central social agency “District Work Himmelreich”. The new mandate, which allowed the counselling team to operate there, was negotiated with these partners. The objective was broken down into sub-goals and measures.

Achieved counselling goals:

Definition of measures related to the conflict-in-progress. Formulation of a new counselling mandate and creation of a suitable local support structure.

2.2 Analysis of sub-conflict

The steering body and the counselling team performed another situation and conflict analysis. The goal was to get an overview of the structure of services and offers in the Himmelgasse quarter and win new partners from the population.

The results of the interviews showed that the potential for conflict lay chiefly in the lack of meeting places for youths and for the different resident groups, too. Moreover, the mix of freehold flats and subsidised housing led to a dispute over the value preservation of the purchased flats and the common good of all residents.

Case Study 1: A preventive conflict counselling in the city of Donnenweil

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

2.3 Recommendations for action for the sub-conflict and counselling during the implementation

The steering body developed concrete measures: Social participation and interaction played a central role. An exhibition was organised in the Himmelmegasse quarter, showcasing photographs and the (hi)story of different residents. The presentation of wildly different paths of life reduced barriers between neighbours and helped the residents overcome anonymity and get in touch with one another.

In addition, an open house day in all the institutions and venues of the quarter and a joint calendar of events were established to ensure better networking of the individual providers and social organisations in the different neighbourhoods. Now, services and events could be adapted to the needs of the different resident groups, and resources could be employed more effectively using synergy effects.

It turned out that to implement concrete activities, the counselling team needed the support of the local community centre. Therefore, the counselling organisation started a new test phase, which involved the deployment of another employee, Ms. Serenity. She did not have a counselling mandate, but directly supported the implementation of the measures.

On site, Ms. Serenity cooperated closely with counsellor Mr. Patience, and in addition worked in tandem with a social worker employed by the local community centre.

Achieved counselling goals:

Counselling during the implementation and active involvement in the implementation of measures for managing the defined areas of tension.

3. Conclusion of counselling

Measures for managing the areas of tension were now being implemented. The continued employment of Ms. Serenity by a social organisation after the end of the project guaranteed the sustained continuation of a conflict-sensitive neighbourhood work. Moreover, the department “Family and Social Affairs” had filed an application for financing neighbourhood work. The concrete goal was the expansion of personnel resources of the Donnenweil municipality, to ensure social support for the mixing of the population that had been achieved through structural/construction measures. At this point, the counselling process came to its conclusion.

Achieved counselling goals:

Exemplary management of potential for conflict with decision-makers from municipal administration and social agencies. Sustainable establishment of a post for the preventive management of potential for conflict.

Case Study 2: A de-escalating counselling intervention in the city of Westmünsterrode

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

Background

The area around Maikäferstraße in Westmünsterrode had been a residential quarter for the families of US-American military personnel between the late 1970s and the early 1990s. After that, the flats went on the open market, were bought by the municipality or private investors. Many of them were let as subsidised housing. Due to the spacious layout of the flats, it was mostly families with several children who settled in Maikäferstraße. The percentage of families with a migrant background was higher than in the city as a whole. All in all, almost 740 persons lived in the quarter.

In the year 2002, the blocks of flats in Maikäferstraße and another residential area were combined into a redevelopment area. Nevertheless, Maikäferstraße was exempted from the renovation measures begun in 2011, which caused annoyance among residents.

Starting in the late 1990s, the street also became the battleground for adolescent drug-dealing gangs and their territorial disputes. Increasingly, the area gained a reputation for being a dangerous quarter governed by social decline and crime. Some representatives of the authorities and members of the population got the impression of a legal vacuum.

Starting in 2006, the local police cracked down on criminal activity with more investigations and enforcement measures. The area was temporarily declared a “disreputable place” by the police, which provides the officers with legal certainty for so-called “event-unrelated stop and search” or discretionary checks without cause. Since 2007 at the latest, the situation in Maikäferstraße escalated further: Physical violence among resident groups and against representatives of the authorities increased. In the following years, different actors in the local community tried to influence the situation in the quarter with a variety of measures.

1. First counselling loop

1.1 Initial contact

When communicating with the municipality, the head of the police department signalled great interest in new ways of dealing with and handling the difficult situation. The state integration commissioner knew of existing contact between an organisation specialising in local conflict counselling and a neighbouring city. She facilitated contact and in 2009, an initial enquiry was made. The counselling organisation and the officials in the Westmünsterrode administration arranged to stay in contact regarding the options of future counselling.

Achieved counselling goals:

The people in charge in the municipal administration recognise the fact that there is a conflict and that outside counselling might be helpful.

Case Study 2: A de-escalating counselling intervention in the city of Westmünsterrode

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

1.2 Clarification of expectations

Information about the counselling process and the ways the municipality dealt with the conflict to date were exchanged, in order to clarify whether the counselling organisation's approach was compatible with the expectations of the heads of the city's administration. Cooperation of actors from the realm of civil society and municipal administration in the field of conflict management had rarely been tested in the federal state Westmünsterrode is part of. In a meeting, the counselling team suggested they conduct a preliminary examination, which would form the basis for the application for funding.

Achieved counselling goals:

The cooperation partners in the counselling process have met in person and seen that the local conflict counselling approach might offer a suitable answer to the conflict situation.

1.3 Preliminary examination

Immediately after the initial contact in 2009, a team of two experienced counsellors, Mr. Kenning and Ms. Sage, travelled to Westmünsterrode and spent several days there. The counselling team had detailed conversations with those in charge within the municipality, the police and the district administration. They also visited the neighbourhood in question. The interests and positions of those involved were manifold and partly controversial, as they presented themselves to the team. Some of them were as follows:

- The **municipality's** interest lay in not playing up the issues of violence and drug dealing, to prevent further reputational damage and to be able to position the city as a family-friendly place to live.
- The heads of the **police department** wanted to protect their employees from violence and strain; thus, they wanted municipal decision-makers to get involved at an early stage.
- A **municipal authority** wanted to implement a large-scale urban renewal project in the neighbourhood.
- **Environmental activists** had provided evidence for a tree species worthy of protection in the area marked for refurbishment.
- Different **authorities** or **agencies** wanted the city's support for their concerns and recognition in the community.
- The neighbourhood **handball club** wanted a reversal of their suspension.
- The **shop owners** in the city centre wanted less shoplifting.

Case Study 2: A de-escalating counselling intervention in the city of Westmünsterrode

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

- **Residents** with a migrant background wanted to be accepted and to live in the city and be able to maintain certain habits and privileges (religious celebrations, TV channels in their native languages etc.)
- **Young people** wanted better educational opportunities and an end of their exclusion from the job market.
- **Home owners** wanted to stop the decline in value of their properties.
- **Residents** without a migrant background wanted to see the municipality step in and take measures to increase safety and clean up rubbish.
- **Drug dealing gangs** wanted to continue to do their business unhindered.
- The **district administrator** wanted the relationship between residents in the quarter and the authorities to normalise and be as amicable as everywhere else in the district.
- The **mayor** wanted to be the representative of the whole city.

Ms. Sage and Mr. Kenning consolidated the information they had gathered and drew up a planning document for a project proposal. In addition, during this visit they also clarified the expectations of the enquiring authority.

Representatives of the administration understood that what would be done was “an evaluation of sorts”, namely of the measures already in place, and a review of their effectiveness. They also understood that, due to the approval period of funding providers, a considerable period would pass between this preliminary examination and the actual start of the project, and that therefore, the municipality would have to make a financial contribution at the start of the counselling process.

Achieved counselling goals:

The cooperation partners commit to the process and work out a basis on which to submit a project funding application. Trust is built.

1.4 Awarding the counselling mandate

In late 2010, funding was approved, and a council order released funds from the municipality’s budget that should flow into the project. The counselling organisation appointed Mr. Kenning and Ms. Sage as counselling team, and they further familiarised themselves with the situation.

Ms. Sage and the team involved in the preliminary examination organised an initial meeting with the municipal prevention committee, consisting of the heads of municipal and district authorities, police department and judiciary.

Case Study 2: A de-escalating counselling intervention in the city of Westmünsterrode

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

Points clarified in the initial meeting:

- The counselling process is governed by the prevention committee.
- The members of the prevention committee agree to the counsellors' proposed methods.
- They support the process by providing information, hints and contacts.
- The counsellor discusses all future steps on site and in advance, handles confidential information as such, and only does public outreach when agreed upon with the committee.

After this clarification, the counselling team headed by Ms. Sage had a clear, publicly legitimised mandate. The creation of an unequivocal and transparent basis for action was essential for the subsequent counselling process.

Achieved counselling goals:

The need for support with conflict management is publicly acknowledged, too. A structured form of cooperation is agreed on. Some of the actors involved in the conflict have great faith in the manageability of the conflict.

1.5 Situation and conflict analysis

Between February and August 2011, the counselling team around Mr. Kenning and Ms. Sage scheduled interviews of about one hour on average with the following actors:

- representatives of the relevant authorities and agencies,
- representatives of the parties that constitute the city council,
- representatives of clubs, associations, organisations and institutions of the community,
- youth workers and social workers from the youth centre, the multi-generational house and the house of cultures,
- shop owners from the vicinity of the neighbourhood,
- residents of the neighbourhood.

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(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

Primarily, these interviews consisted of empathic listening and confidential, informal conversations.³⁸ All approached actors were open to conversation; many expressed their satisfaction about the fact that someone listened to them. Residents talked about their worries and fears for their adolescent children in the neighbourhood; youths about their experiences with being at a disadvantage and discriminated against because of their place of residence, especially when applying for jobs; representatives of social work talked about the difficulty of getting the residents to accept and participate in their offers, etc.

In August 2011, a workshop with representatives of all vital branches of public life (including the neighbourhood) was held. As part of this workshop, Mr. Kenning and Ms. Sage reported their experiences:

- focus on the appreciation of the participants' contribution to the development of their city,
- straightforward naming of observations that are deemed problematic,
- involvement of participants through feedback and discussion of their findings,
- mayor's commitment to the importance of the process and public statement of his support for the wish to overcome the split or schism,
- shift of focus from individual assignment of guilt regarding the conflict towards an understanding of dynamic correlations between attitudes, decisions and actions of different actors in the goings-on within the city.

Starting during the workshop, a few of the actors began discussing what could be changed. For some of the aforementioned actors, the perception shifted from "the quarter is problematic" to "the city is split or divided". They therefore discussed the situation as a conflict they were able to influence together.

In the follow-up of the workshop, the prevention committee decided to publish the conflict analysis together with the plan for action.

Achieved counselling goals:

An (as yet internal) working basis for the development of proposals or recommendations for action has been created. A number of actors is willing to participate in the development of proposals for action. Those involved in the conflict experienced that they can talk about their point of view and be heard. Central actors of the community understand their role in the process and recognise their contributions to the escalation or de-escalation of the conflict, respectively. Other parties involved in the conflict have faith that the situation, which they experience as problematic, can be changed.

³⁸ For a description of empathic listening, see [Module C](#).

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(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

1.6 Development of recommendations for action and action plan

In the span of several weeks, Mr. Kenning and Ms. Sage discussed the results of the conflict analysis with a number of actors, who were willing to exert influence on the situation in the city. Together with these, they pondered what might be done differently.

The counselling team's role in this was as follows:

- offering the actors the opportunity to ask questions at the beginning of the process, so they would better understand their role in the conflict, and could share their perspective on it,
- encouraging future-oriented thinking and keeping it going,
- fostering creativity,
- naming possible effects of the proposed measures on the conflict dynamics.

The results were written down, fleshed out and presented to the affected parties for review. They were also presented to the prevention committee in their regular meetings and discussed in terms of soundness and feasibility.

The results of this process were summarised as recommendations by Mr. Kenning and Ms. Sage. The presentation of the resulting action plan took place as part of a public event in the council hall. All actors who had been interviewed or talked to regarding questions related to conflict management took part in this event; their representatives sat on a podium that took a stand and gave their opinion on the counselling team's presentation. They explained how they wanted to implement the respective action approaches and what they had already begun of them. Following the event, the results were made publicly available in the form of a printed document, and especially the podium's voluntary commitment statements were published in the press.

Achieved counselling goals:

Relevant actors have started to describe their contributions to conflict management. They are beginning to see themselves as active contributors regarding the conflict dynamics. An according public agreement exists. Co-operation and the development of synergies from different actions and activities are at the centre of the conflict actors' thinking.

1.7 Assistance with implementation of recommendations for action

As early as spring 2012, the prevention committee's mode of operation had been examined, and suggestions for its optimisation had been collected. This task had fallen to the counselling team. The main point was to enhance the prevention committee's ability to assist with long-term processes, but also to ensure the trusting cooperation of the heads of different agencies and to harness the specialist knowledge of the practitioners within the agencies. This meant that an agenda was drafted for each session, which was flanked by goal-ori-

Case Study 2: A de-escalating counselling intervention in the city of Westmünsterrode

(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

ented moderation. The minutes were promptly sent out to the representatives of various agencies. Results and effects could thus be checked and reviewed in the next session. Moreover, the confidential session on the executive level was expanded: Ad hoc working groups developed proposals, concepts and problem descriptions regarding the extant problems (e.g. youth-on-youth crime in the neighbourhood, impact of cultural and sports associations and clubs on the quarter, intercultural competency inside the agencies).

Starting in late 2012, neighbourhood forums were established in Maikäferstraße to enable the discussion of issues that were of interest to a lot of people in the quarter, but that were as yet unresolved, such as property management banning the mounting of satellite dishes on facades, mould growth on the walls of flats, rubbish in the quarter, and later also how to deal with the influx of refugees. These previously identified key issues were the object of the respective counselling efforts in the neighbourhood forums. Both residents and vital representatives of the municipal administration or the police department involved in the respective issue took part in these counselling sessions. Together, the participants developed qualified proposals for the solution of the issues at hand. The role of the counselling team consisted in assisting the neighbourhood forums as regards methodology – definition of the concrete topic to be addressed, mutual listening, letting everyone involved have their say, avoiding taking the victim part and instead aiming for constructive attitudes and suggestions (to name just a few points) – and in providing a process-oriented moderation that encourages concrete proposals and makes contributors feel appreciated. Mr. Kenning and Ms. Sage did not assume this task themselves but let a youth worker with an in-depth grasp of the neighbourhood do it.

To strengthen inter-agency cooperation and to develop new perspectives regarding the intercultural coexistence in the community, the heads of the agencies held workshops on intercultural competency twice a year starting in 2013. Each time, participants came from the municipal and the district administration and the police department, and were organised by one of the agencies involved, according to schedule. The counselling team's role was to play a part in the conceptual development of the training.

Mr. Kenning and Ms. Sage were only asked to provide process assistance for some of the implementation steps, for example to support moderation of the neighbourhood forums or for their input on a session of the social committee. The police department introduced case supervision to review and improve how operations were handled. This was implemented under the guidance of the *Sozialwissenschaftlicher Dienst* of the police headquarters directorate (i.e.: a social sciences division). The city council reversed its decision to sell the quarter's youth centre, rebranding it as a community centre. The mayor and one sitting city council party came to the neighbourhood and fielded questions from the residents.

Achieved counselling goals:

The community is on its way to addressing and initiating changes in many areas. New co-operations develop. Communication is strengthened and intensified, victim mentality is gradually replaced by taking responsibility and a proactive approach to logjams and obstacles. Agreements are entered into, implemented and observed. Involved parties plan and act in a conflict-sensitive fashion and direct their focus on the processual nature of conflict management themselves as active contributors regarding the conflict dynamics. An according public agreement exists. Cooperation and the development of synergies from different actions and activities are at the centre of the conflict actors' thinking.

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(an actual case from local conflict counselling, with details altered)

2. Second and third counselling loop

Starting in 2014, the city's prevention committee tasked the counselling team with addressing selected topics, which were dealt with by doing brief studies or conducting counselling interviews:

- the role of school suspension and absenteeism in the formation of youth gangs;
- the background of use of violence in a housing complex for low-income-families;
- the impact of the increased influx of refugees in late 2015, especially regarding the gender ratio in Westmünsterrode and neighbouring municipalities.

Achieved counselling goals:

Sub-conflicts and newly emerged problem areas are being managed. Inter-agency cooperation in the management of conflicts is strengthened. Obstacles to communication are overcome so involved parties can act preventively.

3. Conclusion of the counselling process

In the meantime, the neighbourhood is no longer stigmatised (indicators for this: towards the end of the counselling process, people in the city no longer talked about the "quarter Maikäferstraße" in the same way as before, and the residents no longer solidarised with the criminals. A school exchange with a Northern African country was established, and the handball club is playing in the Kreisliga (i.e.: district league). The quarter's residents have the confidence to apply for jobs all over the city. People from other parts of Westmünsterrode come to the neighbourhood for family celebrations or take part in the youth exchange. The neighbourhood forum is still active. The city stands by its conflict history. At the close of 2015, the cooperation project of the counselling organisation and the city of Westmünsterrode is concluded. The city remains part of the inter-communal contact network of all counselled municipalities and districts.

Achieved counselling goals:

Achieved counselling goals: The general image of the neighbourhood has improved. For the residents, new ways of organising have been established, which also allow them to become visible in a positive way within the city. The permeability between the population of the quarter and the rest of the city's population has increased. The newly established institutions are used for dealing with other conflicts in the city, too.

Those in charge can identify potential for conflict early on, i.e. before they escalate to involve violence, and can take measures to manage them.

Inter-agency communication functions on different administrative levels.

The city addresses their conflict history in a candid manner, and responsible parties are available to offer suggestions for conflict management to any interested decision makers in other communities, municipalities or districts.

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