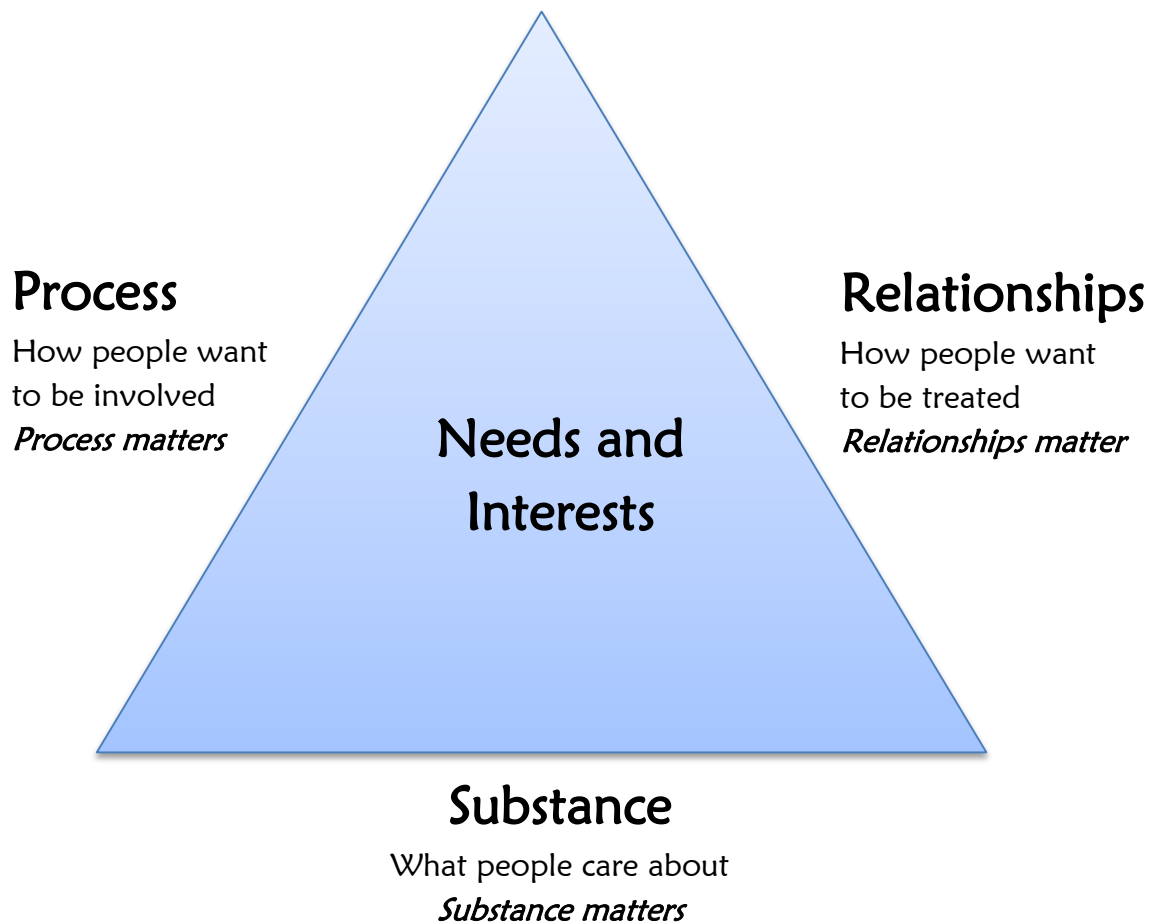


The Triangle of Needs & Interests*

People have three interdependent types of needs and interests that should be carefully considered when holding difficult conversations or planning activities to address contentious issues. Although it is rare to meet *all* the needs and interests of *all* those engaged in a dispute, when we take each type into account (at least partially), those involved will be generally more satisfied, even if they still have reservations about final decisions or outcomes.



Conflicts can arise when people feel that one or more of their needs and interests have been *unnecessarily* sacrificed in pursuit of someone else's objectives.

*CDR Associates (2007) – based on C. Moore (1986)

Guiding questions:

Substance Needs and Interests (Ex: Payments, responsibilities, information, timeframes, survival, etc.)

- *What* do people want out of this discussion, decision, or issue and *why*?

Process Needs and Interests (Ex: Desire for an efficient, fair, and timely process; clearly understandable steps-transparency; an opportunity for all parties to express their views)

- How do people want to interact with me and my organization or business?
- If given their choice, what role would they want to have in decision-making?
- How do they want to communicate with me/us or receive information?

Relationships Needs and Interests (Ex: Feeling trusted and respected, saving face, feeling heard, maintaining dignity, feeling that relationships are valued)

- How people *feel* about the issues/my organization or business? Do they feel listened to?
- Do the issues involved trigger memories of past conflicts, broken promises, or bad relationships?
- How can we show respect for people while still talking about *substance* interests?
- Am I/are we using “blaming” language? Names/terms that convey a lack of respect?

Person or Group we want or need to engage with: _____

Substance Needs/Interests:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Process Needs/Interests

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Relationships Needs/Interests:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____