

# conflict resolution

(kɒn'flɪkt' rɛz-ɪ-lʊʃən)

v. solving problems among group members so everyone feels good about working together

**When the parties in conflict work together to resolve their differences, they will generally obtain the most positive results. They may need a bit of guidance from someone outside of the situation. Utilizing the following strategies may help you reach an agreeable resolution for everyone involved.**

**Define the situation.** Both sides should have an opportunity to express what they view is the problem, as well as what they believe the other side feels the problem is. This may also help clear up any miscommunication or misunderstanding in the situation.

**Get the specifics.** Who is involved? What has happened? When and where did the problem begin? Why? How could it have been avoided (for future reference)?



**Brainstorm options.** Work together to generate ideas of how to resolve the problem.

**What if...?** Predict the likely results of each option. Evaluate them together and decide the most viable option. It is okay to take some time to make a decision – a quick decision can do more harm than good when it turns out to be the wrong decision.

**Don't try to resolve the conflict by intimidation.** Yelling at someone or using manipulation techniques may stop the problem at that moment, but it is not a long-term solution.

**Go for it – and don't forget it.** Implement your plan as soon as possible. Set some future meeting dates for the parties to discuss how successful they have been at resolving the conflict.



**A positive experience.** Look at conflict as a positive experience rather than a negative experience. Out of conflict comes communication, change, and cooperation.



**define yourself. get involved.**

**Of course, you can prevent conflicts from ever occurring. Here are some preventative measures that you can use.**

**Own your feelings.** Use "I" statements to reduce defensiveness.

**Dismantle the rumor mill.** Eliminate gossip and rumors among your group members. If gossip is spreading, ask the speaker how he or she knows the information and then go to the source directly to verify or discredit the rumor.



**Backstabbing – bad; Communication – good!** Encourage group members to speak with whomever they are experiencing a problem, rather than complaining to others about it.



**Don't avoid it.** When a conflict is building, confront the problem head-on and deal with it, rather than pretending it does not exist. Be professional and courteous in your dealings.

**Focus on current issues.** No matter how hard we try, we cannot change the past, so there is no sense dwelling on it.

**24 hour rule.** Address misunderstandings within 24 hours. Letting gossip, rumors, and assumptions simmer for much longer often causes the issue to grow.

**Benefits of conflict resolution**

- Promotes new ideas and increases productivity
- Encourages greater understanding between co-workers, supervisors, and group members
- Strengthens personal relationships and improves self-esteem

**When you learn how to resolve conflicts, difficult situations are much less likely to result in crisis.**

References:

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