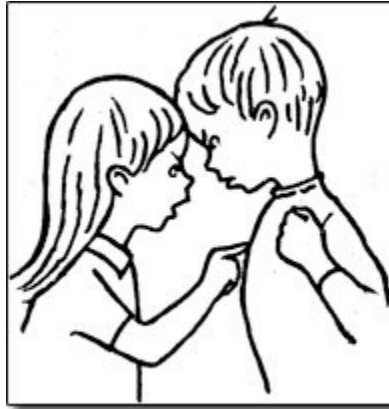


# CONFLICT RESOLUTION



## How do you deal with a conflict?

One of the most difficult things you will deal with in any organization is conflict with or among members. With a few basic skills, you can successfully deal with conflict in a positive manner as it arises.

### Basics of Conflict:

- Conflict is **Inevitable** - This is extremely important to keep in mind. It is NATURAL for conflict to occur.
- Conflict is **NOT** a Dirty Word - It is not a sign that those involved are bad people or that they are less worthwhile as members of our society. Familial influence is usually the source of this belief, e.g., "Don't fight with your sister!" "Try to get along." "Can't you just share your things?"
- **Conflict Arises for Many Reasons** and Takes Many Forms - You must be aware that there are many reasons for people getting involved in conflict and many ways that this conflict can manifest itself. The key is your ability to RECOGNIZE and ADJUST your conflict management approach to the specific context.
- **Conflict Encourages Introspection** – Conflict keeps an organization on its toes by providing a "checks and balances" system when viewed in a positive light. By dealing constructively with the criticism, strides can be made toward improving the organization.

## How to manage conflict?

### Do not fear conflict:

- Conflict can only be successfully managed by acknowledging it and dealing with it.
- Avoidance or surrender often will lead to prolonged or escalated conflict in the future.
- Keep discussion on a specific topic.
- Avoid the introduction of irrelevant issues as they may only escalate the conflict or lead to the discussion of unrelated problems.
- Keep an open mind on views that differ from your own.
- The goal in conflict management should be to open your mind as much as possible to allow for variances in perception; a defensive attitude will only heighten the conflict.

### Test criteria used in making value judgments:

- Seek a reliable information base for evaluation rather than using your own personal value system.
- Cooperate rather than compete.
- Do not attempt “to win” at the expense of the other person; conflict should be managed in cooperation rather than competition.
- Use an open-minded approach when resolving conflict, utilize all the positive or neutral techniques that you have already learned; discuss conflict resolution failures and learn from past mistakes.

### Note:

In some conflicts, one person may initially look at the outcome competitively while the other has a cooperative outlook. In this situation, the nature of the conflict will depend on whether the person looking at the conflict competitively draws the other person into competition or whether the person looking at the outcome cooperatively influences the other to cooperate. Everyone thinks about conflicts differently, there is almost always more than one outlook



# Confrontation

## A Seven-Step Plan of Action

### **Step One: Initiate Contact**

- Choose one confronter who is respected and admired by the person being confronted.
- Choose a private location.
- Time the confrontation as closely as possible to the inappropriate behavior.
- If necessary, cool off before confronting.

### **Step Two: Establish Rapport**

- Show respect for the person being confronted.
- Begin by saying something that will establish a sense of rapport and mutual trust.

### **Step Three: Identify the Issue/Problem**

- Clearly define the issue to yourself before you begin exploring it with the person; be able to succinctly state the problem in non-threatening terms.
- Listen carefully to what is being said.
- Do not ask the question “why?” as it allows an excuse and justification for the problem; stick to questions of “what?”.
- Keep to the issue.
- Gain factual knowledge of what happened.
- Do not excuse behavior.

### **Step Four: Problem is Agreed Upon**

- Work with the person to identify the problem; he/she must agree with you that a problem exists.
- Condemn the behavior, not the individual.
- Your language should reflect that “we have a problem” rather than “you have a problem.”
- Help the person identify the impact and consequences of his/her actions.

### **Step Five: Obtain Attainable Commitment**

- Provide the person with an opportunity to “win,” to succeed.
- Don’t set standards or announce terms that you are not prepared to enact or enforce.
- Mutually agree upon an attainable commitment on his/her part.

### **Step Six: Keep Commitment**

- Predetermine a date and time to evaluate progress toward the commitment.
- Follow through on any agreements made.
- Be firm in the standards you set.
- Support the individual’s attempts to change.

### **Step Seven: Praise Success**

- Offer praise and positive feedback for successes.
- Obtain a commitment for further changes by extending the attainable commitment.