

TIPS TO MANAGE CONFLICTS EFFECTIVELY



Remember: when a conflict arises, there are two concerns to manage – the issue itself *and* the relationship with the other person or people.

Know yourself. Be aware of your tendency to avoid, accommodate, compete, compromise or collaborate around conflict. Also be aware of which strategy you use for specific types of conflict. If the style you usually use hasn't resolved the conflict, try a new approach.

Pause before you react. Avoid jumping to conclusions. Whenever possible, allow yourself time to collect information about the situation, and then reflect on it before lunging into battle. Tell the other party, "Now that you've made me aware of this, I'll look into it and get back to you as soon as possible." Follow up, as promised, in a timely manner.

Choose your battles wisely. Not all issues need to be addressed. Weigh out the pros and cons of tackling the issue vs. not tackling it. Ask yourself "Will the problem resolve itself?" Or "Will the problem grow bigger and negatively impact the relationship/work environment?" Under certain circumstances, no action may be the best action.

Avoid blame. Accept responsibility for your actions and the impact they have on others.

Apologize. Apologies, when truly fitting, have an exceptionally positive impact on restoring trust and respect.

Speak assertively. Use I-statements when discussing the conflict.

For example: *"I feel disrespected when you have side-conversations while I'm facilitating our staff meeting. From now on, I would like you to withhold your conversation until after the meeting or, better yet, please share your opinions during the meeting with everyone."*

Or, if it's a personal issue: *"Our relationship is very important to me and I want to tell you something in hopes of improving it. I feel angry when you blow up at me and say that I'm not doing enough to help out with the house and the kids. I feel like I am contributing what I can and what I know how to do. I would like for us to talk about it before you get to that blow-up point so I understand what you need from me."*

Collaborate whenever possible. Collaboration allows multiple people to participate in resolving a problem or achieving a goal. When you want commitment/dedication to the outcome or buy-in from others, be sure to collaborate on the issue. Not only will you resolve the conflict, you'll be less likely to see that issue repeat itself.

For assistance with conflict management or other life areas,
call your Employee Assistance Program. We'll be glad to help!

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