

Conflict Management & Confrontation

Conflict should be viewed as positive rather than negative because conflict promotes communication, problem solving, and necessary change.

Styles of Conflict Management

- **Competing:** Individual pursues his/her interests at other's expense.
- **Accommodating:** Individual neglects his/her own interests to satisfy another.
- **Compromising:** Individual seeks to find expedient, mutually acceptable solution.
- **Avoidance:** Characterized by non-assertive, passive behavior. Person does not openly pursue his/her own concerns or those of the other person, and refuses to engage openly in the conflict. May change the subject or withdraw from the issue.
- **Collaboration:** Individual seeks to find solution which fully satisfies both parties.

Collaboration is the best style for student groups because it satisfies both parties, allows for creativity in developing resolution, and it gives participants a sense of accomplishment that they have together resolved an issue without losing anything. Steps for collaboration include:

- Determine the nature of the conflict. Is it a philosophical difference or a difference of expectations?
- State the real effect the conflict has on you.
- Listen carefully to the other people. What are the real effects on them? What do they see as the conflict?
- Initiate the problem solving process:
 - Clarify the issue - What is the real problem/issue at hand?
 - Discuss each person's wants and needs.
 - Generate a list of all possible solutions - Be creative.
 - Decide together on the solution most acceptable to both parties.
 - Discuss how solution will be implemented.
 - Develop process to evaluate solution after a specific time.
 - Discuss how discrepancies/problems with solution will be handled.

Know Yourself

- Identify your own conflict style
- Identify the types of situations or people that make you angry
- Be aware of your "down times"
- Take care of yourself



Two Special Issues in Conflict Resolution

Dealing with the non-negotiators

- Some individuals will refuse to negotiate because they want to protect their interests. Here are a few pointers for dealing with them:
 - Start to negotiate anyway
 - Explain why it is in their interest to negotiate
 - Talk about how resolving the issue will help them
 - Make the issue important to them

Dealing with the non-trusting

- Some individuals simply can't/won't trust you. But do your best! Consider the following:
 - Find something that you both agree on
 - Listen carefully to their issues/concerns
 - Start small - don't be discouraged if you can't resolve all the issues at once

Causes of Conflict

Prior Hostility: We sometimes get mad in one situation but express it in another.

Assumptions or Expectations: We often get frustrated when situations or people are not what we expect. This type of frustration can easily lead to angry feelings and conflict.

Violating another person's needs: Each of us has a variety of needs, to feel competent, in control, accepted, independent. When these needs are violated you may see aggressiveness, defensiveness, rejection, withdrawal, and lack of communication.

Value Differences: Ultimately we may come to real value differences. There is a difference in how you want to live and how I want to live. We have three choices here:

- One or both of us could change
- We could stop having a relationship and/or stop communicating
- We could tolerate each other and learn to appreciate what we do have in common, we could co-exist the way we are knowing that we will always have that basic difference.

