**CONFLICT RESOLUTION TOOL**

While many may find conflict uncomfortable, when it is managed appropriately, it draws out diverse ideas, builds trust, and can lead to better outcomes. Use this tool when conflict arises to make sure to engage in productive healthy conflict.

**PLANNING QUESTIONS**

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| 1. **Describe the conflict situation**. Focus on the issue, problem, or disagreement, not on people or personalities. What are the facts? |
| 1. **Identify the source(s) of the conflict**. Do all people involved have the same data and information? Do they agree on the facts? Could the use of different methods or procedures be an issue? Might limited resources or relationships be a factor? Are there different goals and interests, or values at play? |
| 1. **Downsize the conflict.** What do you think people can agree on? What are you willing to “give” on? What common priorities do you share? |
| 1. **Consider the “who” and your role. Is this a matter about which you need to engage?** Do others need to be involved to resolve this conflict? Why or why not? What is your role in the conflict? Are you a party to the dispute, are you serving as a mediator, or are you the decision maker? |
| 1. **Decide on the logistics.** What location makes the most sense? Is there a place or time of day that will be most conducive to problem solving? How will you ensure there is enough time for working the problem all the way through? |
| 1. **Prepare to engage.** What information is needed to move to a positive resolution. What do you need from the other person? What aspects of the conflict are not “negotiable” to you and why? What might you want to say to avoid making decisions in the moment or if you want to agree to disagree. |

**INTERRUPT BIAS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS**

Understand four common types of bias that can impact conflict resolution. Reflect on your conflict situation and determine which of these may be at play. Being aware of these will help you do a better job interrupting bias when you are collaborating with others.

1. The **tendency to simplify the conflict situation** can trigger inappropriate responses on both sides of the conflict. *Have you adequately assessed the situation and are you aware of the source(s) of conflict?*
2. The **tendency to exaggerate the degree of opposition** between the parties tends to make the situation worse – and often without realizing it. *Have you “downsized the conflict” by thinking through what you agree on and by identifying common goals?*
3. The **tendency to make an “either or” or false dichotomy** between the two issues – one that says you must either push-back or give-in for example. *Have you identified those aspects of the conflict are not “negotiable” to you and what you are willing to give-in on?*
4. The **tendency to favor one's own interests and self is called egocentric bias** and it leads people to think they have more control over a situation than they do. Have you thought about the overall goal to align your priorities with the bigger picture?

**BEST PRACTICES FOR THE CONFLICT CONVERSATIONS**

Once you have completed the planning questions and analyzed the role biases may play in your conflict situation, follow these four steps to successfully engage with others.

**Sources:**

[Conflict and Dispute Quick Tips from the NCPRE](https://ws.engr.illinois.edu/sitemanager/getfile.asp?id=4305)

[Conflict Resolution - Career Skills from MindTools](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm)

[Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings from NOAA](https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/planning-and-facilitating-collaborative-meetings.pdf)

[Summary of "Judgmental Biases in Conflict Resolution and How to Overcome Theme](https://www.beyondintractability.org/artsum/thompson-judgmental)”

[The Conflict Management Tool Kit by Inside Higher Ed](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/02/20/advice-department-chairs-managing-conflict-essay)