

Manage Conflicts

Compliments of CORE Faculty Development

“Human beings have a wonderful gift for generating conflict.”

- I. Develop listening skills

“Conflicts often occur because people are listening poorly, and they often don’t get resolved because people fail to listen while they’re heatedly disagreeing.”

3 skills that can help you become an active listener:

 - Attentive signals. Provide visual and verbal indications that you are listening by eye contact, nodding your head, and saying things such as, “Uh-huh,” “I see,” “I hear you,” and “I understand what you are saying.”
 - Open-ended probes. Use prompts or open-ended questions to help the other person open up. Open-ended probes are different from fact-finding questions because you are not giving your attention to the problem – you’re giving your attention to the person.
 - Restatement of thoughts and feelings. Restating summarizes what you just heard the other person say. Put into your own words what you think the person said to you.

- II. Follow a six-step model for conflict resolution
 - Step 1. Identify the source of conflict. Some of the most common causes of conflict are goals and responsibilities, values differences, procedures/methods, information, stress, unresolved issues and feelings.
 - Step 2. Choose a general approach to solving the conflict. Five standard approaches: withdrawal/avoidance, dominance/control, accommodation, compromise, collaboration.
 - Step 3. Generate alternative solutions. Brainstorming keeps everyone involved and dedicated to resolution.
 - Step 4. Evaluate and choose the best solutions. This means considering not only usual factors of time, cost, etc., but also the wants and needs of all.
 - Step 5. Implement the solution. Who will be responsible for what takes, when things will be done, how to proceed, and how and when to evaluate the results need to be discussed, as do any technical requirements.
 - Step 6. Perform a follow-up evaluation. Ensure that a system for measuring performance is designed, that a date for evaluation is agreed upon, and that responsibilities for these have been confirmed.

References

Lloyd, S. (1996). *Leading teams: the skills for success*. West Des Moines, IA: American Media Inc.