

Conflict Management

Conflict is a natural part of personal and professional relationships brought on by different values, beliefs, world views and life experiences. These differences might appear trivial, but when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal need is often at the core of the problem. The ability to recognise conflicting needs and the willingness to examine them with compassion and understanding can lead to creative problem solving, team building, and stronger relationships altogether. The key is not to avoid conflict but to handle it in a respectful and positive manner.



HELPFUL TIPS:

- ▶ **Understand conflict management styles.** Consider how you can work to address conflict in ways that feel comfortable and safe. Acknowledge that you appreciate the opportunity to discuss the issue. This helps to ease the tension and move towards an agreement.
- ▶ **Define the conflict** in clear, objective, concrete terms. Be specific when answering the “who, what, when, where, and why” questions. Use assertiveness when describing behaviours, feelings, consequences, and desired changes and focus on behaviours or problems, not people.
- ▶ **Emotional regulation skills** - When you enter a conflict situation feeling threatened, it’s difficult to deal with the problem. Remain calm so you can stay in control and monitor your reactions to the conflict. Notice when you are no longer able to participate productively.
- ▶ **Treat the other person with respect.** Be aware of and respect differences by avoiding disrespectful words and actions. Respectful and appropriate language can almost always resolve a problem faster.
- ▶ **Genuinely consider the other person’s point of view** - To help understand the problem, it may be useful to ask questions about their point of view. Step back and try to imagine how the other person sees things and what drives their behaviours.
- ▶ **Communicate understanding** - Perhaps the most important communication skill to use during conflict is listening. Demonstrate understanding. Validate their concerns, wait patiently for your turn to speak, and aim to understand where they are coming from, even if you don’t necessarily agree.
- ▶ **Explore alternative solutions** - Take turns offering alternative solutions. Listen in a non-judgmental manner, be open to new suggestions, examine the consequences of each solution and aim for compromise – where both parties feel that it is an acceptable outcome.
- ▶ **Agree on the most workable solution** - Agree to a solution you both understand and can work with. Be committed to resolving the conflict, not winning the battle.
- ▶ **Evaluate** - Explain how you see the problem after you have talked about it. Follow up after implementing change and work out a way to check on how well the solution is working. Discuss any changes and adjust the resolution when/if necessary.
- ▶ **Seek professional help when necessary** - Unresolved conflicts cause a great deal of stress in personal and professional relationships. Qualified professionals such as mediators, relationship counsellors and therapists are trained to help people resolve problems in their personal relationships.

All through the year we bring people together to help build : **BETTER CONNECTIONS**

