

Humor and Conflict

Laughter is a great way to relieve tension during a conflict. It gives people a chance to relax, refocus, and rethink their positions. Humor is most effective when you base it on your own personal experience and use yourself as the target.



“You won’t believe what happened to me last week!”

Using humor during the beginning of a conversation can help set the tone of the discussion and help individuals involved in the conflict accept each other’s differences and still enjoy one another. Humor should never insult or belittle anyone so be cautious when using this strategy.

“There is an interesting and useful relationship between laughter and anger. It is impossible to laugh heartily and to be angry at the same time.”
-J. Stepis

Conflict Resolution Resources

For more information about conflict resolution check out the following books in the Involvement Office:

Dealing With People You Can’t Stand
By Brinkman & Kirschner

Difficult Conversations By Stone, Patton, Heen

50 Activities for Conflict Resolution
By Lambert & Myers

Check out these websites:

Department of Student Activities-
www.studentactivities.uconn.edu

Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)
www.teamtrainingsolutions.com/tki.html

Oregon State University-
www.orst.edu/admin/stucon/tenstep.htm

Visit the Involvement Office for information on more topics such as:

- Officer Transition
- Time Management
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Recruiting Members
- Motivating Members
- Event Planning

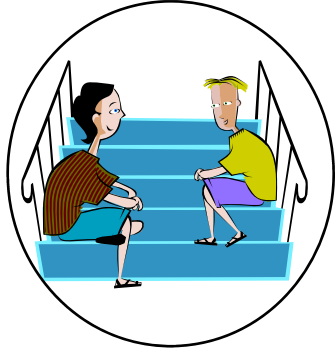
Leadership Programs
Department of Student Activities
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University of Connecticut
Department of Student Activities

Involvement Office

Conflict Resolution



How can you resolve a conflict?

Conflict Resolution

Disagreements happen everyday. Whether it's at home, work, or in class, individuals have different values and opinions that are not always like yours. By learning about the different styles of conflict and by learning skills to resolve conflict, you can effectively express your points and avoid a negative situation.

What is conflict?

Conflict can be defined as any situation where incompatible feelings or intentions occur together. A conflict can take place with one person or more and in small groups or large. It may involve actual confrontation or symbolic confrontation through words or actions. It may be expressed through accusations, threats, or physical action to a person or property. It may also be unexpressed through denial or avoidance.

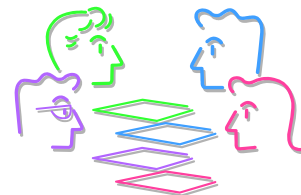


Conflict: Derives from the Latin meaning, "to strike together."

5 Styles of Conflict

When you find yourself in a conflict, ask yourself how you want to respond. Here are five basic ways of dealing with conflict:

- ⇒ *Accommodating*: When a person neglects his/her concerns to satisfy the other person. It is a convenient way to satisfy an immediate need that is not of extreme importance.
- ⇒ *Competing*: When a person satisfies his/her own concerns at the expense of the other person. It is a way to approach conflict knowing that someone will win and someone will lose.
- ⇒ *Compromising*: When the objective is to find an acceptable solution for both parties involved in the conflict by being flexible. This works best when both parties are willing to reduce some of their demands.
- ⇒ *Avoiding*: When a person does not address the conflict or take steps to resolve it. They may change the subject, hide their feelings, or simply leave the room.
- ⇒ *Collaborating*: When the parties involved work together to find a solution that is mutually acceptable. This strategy involves teamwork.



Helpful Hints for de-escalating a conflict:

- ◆ Plan ahead so you are able to state clearly what the problem is and how you feel.
- ◆ Choose a good time and place to discuss the conflict. Keep the other person in mind when deciding on an appropriate time and location.
- ◆ Take a deep breath and try to relax.
- ◆ Give "I" messages only and avoid blaming or name calling.
- ◆ Keep your legs and arms uncrossed and do not clench your fists or purse your lips.
- ◆ Watch your language. Avoid using words like "never, always, can't, won't, etc." Try using words like "I feel, I think, I wonder," etc.
- ◆ Listen to what the other person is saying and acknowledge that you are paying attention by paraphrasing and making eye contact.
- ◆ Ask open-ended questions.
- ◆ Talk it all through and don't leave out parts that are too difficult to discuss.
- ◆ If necessary, ask for a break to collect your thoughts.
- ◆ Work on a solution that works for everyone.
- ◆ Follow through to make sure that the agreement is still working.

