

Leader Tip Sheet

Conflict Resolution Steps

Leading your team through conflict can be challenging—even nerve wracking! But this step-by-step guide will help you lead an effective conflict resolution process.

1. Set ground rules.

- This will keep the meeting respectful and structured.
- Clearly and publicly make it known what will and won't be tolerated.
- Be assertive in reviewing the ground rules throughout the process as needed.
 - See Ground Rules handout

2. Start with the positive.

- Let people know they may feel anxious about the meeting, but no one is in trouble; it's an opportunity to work out issues and find solutions.
- It's easier to get people talking about what's going well.
- Transition into what's not going well.

3. Identify the issues—what's not going well?

- Get a clear understanding from each person of what they perceive the problem to be.
- As a mediator set a calm, respectful tone. Use I statements in this process.
 - Example: "I have seen you talk very disrespectfully towards one another."
 - Not "You two are at each other's throats; it's ridiculous!"

4. Understand everyone's interest in the mediation.

- Ask what people want out of this mediation or for their workplace in general.
- Point out the common ground. The best solution is one that's good for everybody.

5. Talk about possible solutions.

- Brainstorm. Be creative.

6. Evaluate the options and select the best one(s).

- What are pros and cons? Obstacles to following through?
- Ask everyone for a commitment of what they will do to help the team move forward.
- Ask them to write it down and/or say it aloud.

7. Document the agreement(s).

- This will help those solutions become more concrete.
- It will give you something to come back to when you meet again.

8. Agree on monitoring, and evaluation.

- Discuss how to monitor compliance and follow-through. Reiterate expectations.
- Decide when to schedule a follow-up meeting to evaluate progress.

10. Offer EAP as a resource.

- EAP is available for all employees.
- EAP is also available to leaders as a resource or place to debrief.