

Leader Tip Sheet: **Managing Conflict**

When employees are in conflict it is sometimes difficult to know what to do. This guide will help you lead employees effectively through conflict.

1). What is the issue?

Who is involved? Do you understand where each person is coming from?

2). What are the conflict styles of those involved?

Is someone acting too passively (using poor me or aloof styles?) Is someone behaving too aggressively (using intimidation or interrogation?)

3). Should you be directly involved?

Does it impact the work environment? Is it harassment or bullying? Is it an issue that has been escalating with no resolution?

4). What is the complainant willing to do?

- A). Speak directly to the person with whom they have an issue.
- B). Practice role playing a conversation with you that they could have with the other person.
- C). Have a conversation with the other person while you mediate.
- D). Nothing—they are too “afraid” to do anything. (In that case, will you work harder on their problem than they are willing to work themselves?)

5). Do you have clear expectations regarding the outcome ?

What is reasonable or realistic? What work policies or expectations come into play ?

6). Have you communicated your expectations?

Important expectations should be shared in-person, with a written summary to follow (e-mail is fine for the summary).

7). What are the consequences if expectations are not met?

Communicate these consequences along with expectations, but be sure to accentuate your hope and belief that employees can and will meet expectations. (Appropriate consequences might be mandated EAP sessions and/or corrective action.)

8). Does the team need further intervention?

Conflict Resolution Meeting: Allows all parties to get issues out on the table, talk about them as respectable adults, and find a solution that all are agreeable to. Sometimes the discussion may get heated which is ok as long as everyone remains respectful. As a leader it is your job to re-direct the conversation if it starts getting personal. (For further suggestions see Ground Rules, and Conflict Resolution Leader Tip Sheet).

An education/awareness training: Teaches skills and strategies to help people meet expectations. Sessions may focus on Conflict Resolution Skills, Emotional Intelligence, Respectful Workplace, Bullying & Harassment, etc. EAP can be a great resource for training in your department.

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