

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Conflict is inevitable in any interpersonal relationship and can be a positive experience, if managed properly. The ability to manage conflict is probably one of the most important social skills an individual can possess. This information is designed to help you acquire this skill.

HOW DO I HANDLE CONFLICT?

➤ **ATTACK THE BEHAVIOR, NOT THE PERSON**

- Usually, something is said or done that causes conflict to arise
- Stay objective about the issue at hand and keep personal biases/feelings out of it.
- Use active listening skills to understand other views/feelings presented
- Never assume. Always ask questions if you're unsure of something said/done
- Remain calm

➤ **BE CONSCIOUS OF YOUR LANGUAGE**

- Don't project your issue by using the phrase "You didn't..." Use an "I" message.
- Being cognizant of your language can help maintain a civil, working relationship between parties.

APPROACHES TO MANAGING CONFLICT

➤ **COMPETING**

- This is when an individual pursues his/her own concerns at someone else's expense
- Competing might mean "standing up for your rights", defending a position, or trying to strongly influence others
- This approach is power-oriented, and can be seen as manipulative

➤ **ACCOMODATING**

- In this approach, an individual neglects his/her own concerns to satisfy another person
- Can take the form of selfless generosity/charity, or yielding to another point of view without voicing personal concerns/opinions

➤ **AVOIDING**

- Individuals don't immediately pursue their own concerns
 - Some may sidestep an issue, postpone it, or withdraw completely from the situation

➤ **COMPROMISING**

- This allows for parties to find a mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both sides
- This management style gives up more than competing, but less than accommodating
- Addresses issue more directly than avoiding, but still may not produce the depth needed to identify the issue(s)

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➤ COLLABORATING

- Management style that fully satisfies both/all parties involved
- You have the opportunity to dig into an issue to identify underlying concerns
- Most effective approach

HELPFUL TIPS

- **BREATHE AND WALK AWAY IF YOU'RE ANGRY**
- Be aware that not everyone will negotiate with you. Try your best, but know when to walk away
- Be an **active** listener: Don't listen to respond, listen to understand
- Manage the expectations of yourself and others
- Keep the main goals/higher values of your organization at the forefront
- **DO NOT VENT ON SOCIAL NETWORKS**
- Realize that there is an appropriate time and place to address issues—public is not one of them
- Be a problem-solver when it comes to managing conflict
 - Also present solutions to the problem
 - Come with ideas on how to implement solutions
 - Evaluate the plan implemented