

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT 101

SIX STEPS TO COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING	
Step 1:	Define the problem in terms of needs, not solutions
Step 2:	Brainstorm possible solutions
Step 3:	Select the solution that will best meet both parties needs
Step 4:	Plan who will do what, where and by when
Step 5:	Implement the plan
Step 6:	Evaluate the problem-solving process

High Importance



TIPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

YOU'RE BOTH AVOIDING	YOU'RE BOTH IMPOSING
<p><i>What typically happens:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both of you may not take any action. • You may dampen down feelings that could suddenly surface later on. 	<p><i>What typically happens:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neither of you is afraid to say what's on your mind. • The discussion can easily become heated. • In the heat of the moment, you might end up saying things you don't actually believe. • You both feel disrespected.
<p><i>What to do:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the lead. • Say directly, "I know neither of us likes conflict, but I think it would be valuable to discuss what we could do about it." • Do your best to draw the other person out in an empathetic, thoughtful way. • If things get tough, fight your natural inclination to give up. • Problem-solve collaboratively. 	<p><i>What to do:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since you'll both be eager to address the situation, take time to prepare for the conversation. • You're both likely to feel impatient; schedule your discussion in a way that allows you both to take breaks. • Be ready — things may heat up. Suggest a coffee break or a walk to help even out emotions. • Problem-solve collaboratively.
YOU'RE IMPOSING AND THEY'RE AVOIDING	YOU'RE AVOIDING AND THEY'RE IMPOSING
<p><i>What typically happens:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You tend to bulldoze your counterpart into agreeing with you. • Your counterpart may act in a passive-aggressive manner to get their point across. 	<p><i>What typically happens:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might be tempted to play the role of "good guy" and go along with what your counterpart wants. • You might get trampled by your counterpart's requests.
<p><i>What to do:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the person to participate actively in the conversation — not hide their opinions. • Assure them that you can handle critical feedback. • Don't be a bully. • Be patient with the pace of the conversation. • Problem-solve collaboratively. 	<p><i>What to do:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly ask for what you need: "To have a productive conversation, I need you to be patient and watch the tone and volume of your voice." • Earn your counterpart's respect by being direct and to the point. • Don't signal disrespect, which may set off your counterpart. • Problem-solve collaboratively.

References:

Six Steps to Problem Solving – Robert Bolton "People Skills"
Relationships and Goals diagram – Adapted from David Johnson "Reaching Out"
Tips for Resolving Conflict – adapted from Amy Gallo, July 2017 HBR