

RSO Resource Guide: Conflict Management

Conflict happens in every organization. It's part of working as a team, and part of the leader's responsibility is to help solve conflict. How you choose to respond to, and solve, conflict is ultimately a reflection of your leadership style and success. Here are some tips to help you resolve conflict large and small.

1. Practice active listening. Really learn what the substance of the conflict is. Avoid hearsy and gossip, as these habits can only exacerbate the problem.
2. Keep focused on the conflict at hand. Remove personal biases.
3. Always be solution-focused.
4. Offer a time to openly discuss the issue. You may need to set ground rules to reduce complaining and increase focus on problem solving. Rules to consider:
 - a. No personal attacks.
 - b. Discuss only the issue(s) causing conflict. No gossip!
 - c. Time limits may help keep the conversation focused.
5. Understand that conflict can lead to heightened emotions. Don't dismiss emotions, attack the person, or diminish that person for experiencing or showing emotions.
6. Shut down passive-aggressive behavior. This behavior doesn't solve problems.
7. Support those who may feel marginalized during the conflict and discussion.
8. Be humble, and if you have been part of the conflict, genuinely apologize.
9. Agree upon a solution, and make an action plan. Stick to the action plan.
10. Rebuild trust and celebrate your successes!

One conflict doesn't define your organization. Many organizations have conflict every year, and still do amazing things! Don't lose sight of your organizational goals or successes along the way. Ultimately, the whole group is here to work towards a common goal, learn a little, and hopefully have some fun. Keeping your goals in mind can help members and leaders creatively solve issues and make adjustments to the organizational action plan to reach their goals.

If, as you are mediating the conflict, you feel the issue is beyond your ability to solve, contact an Advisor or Student Leadership, Involvement & Community Engagement office for support.

If you have further questions, please reach out to us!

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**STUDENT LEADERSHIP, INVOLVEMENT
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Student Affairs