

Conflict Resolution

In the Workplace

What Does Conflict in the Workplace Mean?

Conflict in the workplace means a disagreement amongst employees due to opposing interests, personalities, beliefs, or ideas. Conflict at work is natural and can happen between anyone working together with different backgrounds and perspectives.

Tips to Successfully Address an Issue or Problem You Are Having with Someone at Work

A. Before Taking Action

Before you can take action to resolve the matter between you and your coworker, you have to prepare yourself to directly confront the issue in an appropriate manner.

1. Identify the Issue

Listen to your thoughts and feelings. Ask yourself, what was done that is causing you to feel uncomfortable. Think about why it is making you feel that way.

2. Consider Your Coworker's Perspective

Take a moment to think about the other person (your coworker). Think to yourself, "why are they like this?" This doesn't mean to put the other person's needs before your own but to consider their background, workstyle and perspectives.

B. Taking Action

After you've identified the issue and considered your coworker's perspective, it is now time to take action!

3. Find Time to Speak With Your Coworker

Ask your co-worker when would be a convenient time to meet. A conversation like this would be best done in person. Avoid texting or email communication. This may cause confusion in getting your point across or understanding the other person's point of view. Arrange to meet in a place where you won't be interrupted.

4. Stay in Control!

Stay in control! When you are meeting with your coworker, stay in control of your emotions and what/how you are feeling. Going into your meeting with your coworker angry or upset is a recipe for failure. Remember, keep your emotions in check, and approach with an open mind.

5. Time For Your Meeting

Focus on the behavior and events, not on personality. Say “When this happens ...” instead of “When you do ...” Try not to blame your coworker when discussing. Describe a specific instance or event instead of generalizing.

Listen carefully. Listen to what your coworker is saying instead of getting ready to react. Avoid interrupting the other person. After your coworker finishes speaking, rephrase what was said to make sure you understand it. Ask questions to clarify your understanding.

Be assertive! Remember to be clear and direct about the issue and how it affects you. Keep in mind that using the conversation or meeting, total silence may be a sign of passive resistance.

6. Seek Resolution

Find common ground or areas of agreement, no matter how small. Agree on the problem, agree on what can happen if the issue is not resolved, and agree on small changes that can help resolve the matter.

Find solutions to satisfy the needs of both you and your coworker. Brainstorm on generating multiple/alternative solutions. Determine which actions will be taken. Make sure you both come to an agreement or understanding on how to resolve the matter moving forward.

C. After Taking Action

Now, you have met with your coworker to discuss the issues or problems at your workplace. You have done this in a respectful and appropriate way with the intention of resolving workplace conflict. Both you and your coworker have come to an understanding and agreed on the best way to move forward together.

7. After The Meeting

After you meet with your coworker, make either a physical or mental note of your agreement. Give each other enough time to adjust, and monitor your coworker’s behavior in addition to your own.

8. If the Problem Persists

Give yourself an honest window of time to reassess the situation. If the issue continues, you might want to escalate to management.

Speak with your supervisor or a human resource representative at your workplace to help resolve the matter.