

Momentum

Conflict resolution for leaders



Go Online to Access More Information!

Insist on integrity and respect

- ☑ When meeting to resolve a conflict, set ground rules that require respectful behavior. Remind participants to control their emotions and treat others as they would like to be treated.
- ☑ Act quickly if conflict becomes harassment. If a problem appears driven by gender, race or sexual orientation issues, intervene immediately. Ask your human resources department to assist.
- ☑ Supervisors should lead by example: treat each team member as a valued, respected member of the organization.

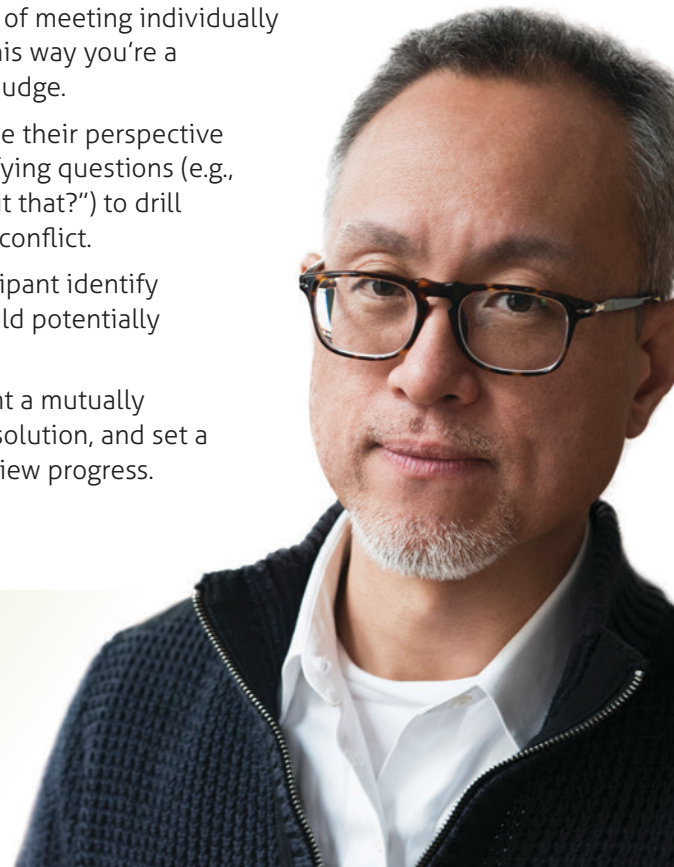
Resolving team disputes

What's visible and what lies beneath often differ. A visitor to your work area might perceive a congenial work team operating smoothly. However, as a leader you may be well aware of underlying conflicts between certain team members.

Whether it's a process dispute, turf war or basic interpersonal disagreement, conflict can sour the work environment and hamper productivity.

- While it's best to encourage employees to self-sufficiently work out issues on their own, sometimes this isn't possible and you need to step in as a mediator.
- As the supervisor, remain objective and don't take sides. For example, establish a group meeting at a neutral location instead of meeting individually with differing parties. This way you're a facilitator rather than a judge.
- Have each party describe their perspective of the conflict. Ask clarifying questions (e.g., "Can you say more about that?") to drill down to the crux of the conflict.
- Require that each participant identify specific actions that could potentially resolve the differences.
- Formulate and document a mutually agreed upon plan for a solution, and set a date to check in and review progress.

According to recent research, managers spend about 35% of their time dealing either directly or indirectly with workplace conflicts. So, expect disagreements—and implement resolution strategies before conflicts escalate.

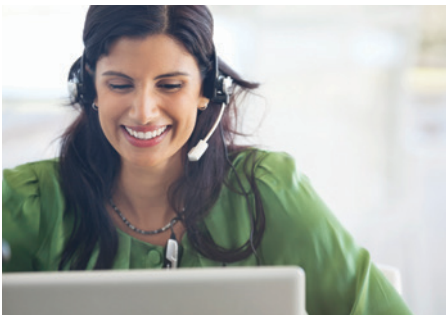


Confront conflict, move the team forward

While a leader's natural inclination may be to avoid conflicts due to the inherent anxiety and uncertainty, confronting conflict can actually lead to process improvements and innovation.

- Avoiding conflict essentially equals avoiding change—which is futile in today's workplace. The comfortable status quo isn't positive for any organization.
- It's important to learn how to manage conflict effectively so it serves as a catalyst, rather than a drag, on group performance.
- Considering a new point of view—an opportunity to reconsider the old—can help generate new processes or organizational ideas that haven't been previously identified.
- You can successfully address and resolve even long-simmering misunderstandings, leading to better long-term group cohesion.
- Those who have dealt with workplace conflict demonstrate a higher understanding of their colleagues, improved working relationships, and better solutions to problems or challenges.
- When facilitating conflict resolution, use positive language to express your confidence that your team can reach a workable solution.

Consult Workplace Support for help with conflicts



Experts are available

When you're seeking ideas on how to address a workplace conflict situation, remember that your EAP offers telephonic access to professional workplace consultants. Our licensed management consultation specialists can help you solidify your strategy and be more confident in addressing difficult issues that your work team may be facing.



When to call

Consider contacting Workplace Support in situations where:

- Conflict does not seem to be improving despite your use of basic intervention techniques
- There may be a risk of employee violence
- You've inherited a work group that has a long history of conflict



All questions taken

Remember that no question or situation is too insignificant for Workplace Support consultants. If you are unsure about the situation, or want to review the EAP options available, simply call your program's toll-free number for a quick consultation. Ask for Workplace Support. The program is available anytime day or night.

Additional sources: HR Professionals Magazine, SmallBusiness.Chron.com, Insperity.com, About.com/Human Resources.



The webinar, "How to Stimulate a Conflict-Free Work Environment," is now available in the Learning Center