

# Conflict Resolution



**Introduction:** Each person looks at a situation from a different point of view. You may not always agree with the other person's viewpoint. Conflicts are not necessarily bad; they often bring about changes--changes which are often for the best. They are a part of life and you shouldn't try to avoid them when they arise. Most conflicts can be resolved through the use of conflict resolution techniques. Conflict resolution tries to get you to stop and think about the consequences before you act.

## Guiding Principles of Conflict Resolution

Even before you try to settle things, define the problem, think about what really happened. We sometimes have silly thoughts that keep us from getting a true picture. Agree that you both want to try and settle things. Remember--no name-calling, speak in a calm voice, maintain good eye contact, no interrupting the other person, listen politely, be respectful.

1. **Agree on a time when you can get together and talk things out.**  
Agree that you will avoid interruptions from others and not interrupt the other person when he/she is talking.
2. **One person should give his/her version of the problem.**  
Talk about feelings (i.e., I feel, I think, I am...) Don't attack or accuse the other person.  
"I was upset when..."
3. **The second person should show that he was actively listening to the first person and retell his/her version of the first person's story.**
4. **Then the second person should give his/her version of the problem;** talk about feelings.  
"You were upset because..."
5. **The first person should actively listen to the second person and retell his/her version of the second person's story.**  
"This is how you saw it..."

**6. Both persons should state what they want and suggest solutions.**

For the solution to work it should be:

- (1) something you both can do
- (2) something that is not harmful to yourself or others
- (3) something that settles the problem so it will not happen again.

Both parties should be willing to explore options, open to compromise. Look for common ground on which you can both agree.

**7. “Maybe we can try this.” “How about this idea”**

**8. Agree on a solution.**

The ideal result of any conflict resolution is that both parties are satisfied. You must realize that you don’t always get your way. You can learn to settle things so both people get something of what they want. We call this a “win-win” solution.

**9. Develop an action plan.**

Get a commitment on the agreed upon action, time, place and responsibilities for each person.

**10. Monitor the plan.**

Determine if resolution is being achieved or whether changes to the plan need to be made. This will help you build future relationships that enable you to get along peacefully as family members, classmates, workers, friends and neighbors.

**11. “I’m glad that things are resolved...”**

**Resolution Assessment Example**

Three students work for an establishment that is very busy on New Year’s Eve. All three students have requested the evening off but the owner can only allow one of the students to have the evening off. The owner decided to let the workers work this situation out on their own.

Answer the following questions and develop an action plan to solve this problem.

**Questions:**

1. What is the conflict in this scenario?
2. What is the desired outcome?
3. What do you think needs to happen to solve this problem?
4. Whose help or cooperation might you need to solve this problem?
5. What do you need to do to get the solution you feel will best resolve this situation?
6. How can you be sure that your solution is the best one to solve this problem?