PROFESSIONAL GUIDE:
CONFLICT RESOLUTION

PROMASTERS

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Conflict Happens

Conflict is...

- a normal, inescapable part of life

- a periodic occurrence in any relationship

- an opportunity to understand opposing preferences and values

- ENERGY

Use cognitive conflict

- Disagreement about ideas and approaches

- Issue focused, not personal

- Characteristic of high performing groups

Avoid affective conflict

- Personal antagonism fueled by differences of opinion

- Destructive to group performance and cohesion

PRO**MASTERS**

How can we keep conflict cognitive?

- Make the approach

- Share perspectives

- Build understanding

- Agree on solutions

- Plan next steps

Step 1. Make the approach

- Reflect before you begin

- Invite the other party to a conversation

- Be clear about your intentions

- State your goal - a positive resolution

Step 2. Share perspectives

- Ask for the other person's perspective

- Paraphrase what you hear

- Acknowledge your contribution

- Describe your perspective

- Ibid.

Understand why your views differ

- (Read from bottom to top) I take action

- I adopt beliefs

- I draw conclusions I add meaning

- I select data Observable data

Name the issues

- Identify topics that the parties view as important to address

- Use concise neutral language

- Avoid pronouns

- Use issues to create the agenda

Step 3. Build understanding

- Discuss one issue at a time

- Clarify assumptions

- Explore interests and feelings

Step 4. Agree on solutions

- Reality test – Is this doable?

- Durability test – Is this durable?

- Interest test – Does this meet all parties' interests?

Step 5. Plan next steps

- Jointly create action plan

- What needs to happen?

- Who needs to do what? By when?

- How will interaction take place if problems occur?

PROMASTERS

Examples of phrases and behaviors that let you know conflict is going on among your people

- **Avoiding personal contact**

- **Shouting**

- **Others**

Passive Behaviors

- **Writing emails vs. talking**

- **Withholding needed information**

- **Not returning messages**

- **Delay giving required support**

Aggressive Behaviors

- **Getting others to take sides**

- **Shouting**

- **Threatening**

- **Undermining other's reputation**

Unintentional Behaviors

- **Sweaty palms**

- **Nervous gestures**

- **Closed body posture**

- **Tense facial expressions**

- **Tears**

Managing Conflict

Competition (unilateral decision making)

- Emergency situations

- Decisive action

- Implementing unpopular change

- When other methods fail

Accommodation (allowing the other side to win)

- Preserving the relationship vs arguing the issue

- When the issue is more important to the other person

- When you want others to express their own point of view

- When you want others to learn by their own choices

Avoidance (decision to not handle)

- If others can resolve conflict more effectively

- If both parties see the issue as minor

- If additional time is required

- If both parties need a cooling off period

Compromise ("win" on both sides)

- To reach agreement when both sides have equal power

- To find common ground when both parties have competing goals

- To achieve a temporary settlement on a complex issue

- To reach a solution due to time pressures

Collaboration (through team input)

- Merging experiences from people having different backgrounds

- Being creative to explore solutions

- Looking for solutions where there may not be much conflict