

CONFLICTS

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QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TRYING TO SOLVE A CONFLICT

- Whose problem is this? Who can resolve it?
- Are there two or three people who have the primary problem?
- Are the right persons at the table, e.g. the people with the problem, not on-lookers?
- Do they want to resolve the conflict?



QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TRYING TO SOLVE A CONFLICT

- Can the conflict be solved without outside help at this time?
- Is this the right time to deal with it?
- Is this the right place?



QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TRYING TO SOLVE A CONFLICT

- How can this become a win/win situation for everyone?
- What outcome or result does each group member want from this conflict?
- What can be done to improve the situation if the group doesn't want to deal with the problem?



QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE TRYING TO SOLVE A CONFLICT

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

- **What is my history with persons from this group?**
- **How well do I communicate with persons from this group?**
- **Am I carrying resentments toward persons from this group?**
- **Am I “bending over backwards” to be liked by persons from this group?**



CONFLICT RESEARCH

Where there is conflict:
rejection, fear, & power
issues are present



CONFLICT RESEARCH

POWER

- What are the power issues in this conflict?
- Are they obvious or hidden?
- Who has power & what kinds of power in this situation?
- Who wants power?
- How is power delegated?



CONFLICT RESEARCH

REJECTION

- What are the rejection issues in this conflict?
- Are they obvious or hidden?
- Who might feel rejected?
- Who is doing the rejecting?



CONFLICT RESEARCH

FEAR

- I may be wrong
- Loss of self-respect or identity
- Loss of personal control
- Loss of relationships
- My behavior may be biased or prejudiced
- Retaliation
- The conflict will drag on
- Job loss



CONFLICT RESEARCH

There are cultural aspects surrounding

- rejection,
- fear
- power



CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN CONFLICTS

1. Different Problem Solving Styles based on gender or cultural styles
2. Rivalries between individuals & groups for power, resources & fairness
3. Miscommunication based on
 - Cultural and/or gender differences in language
 - Cultural and/or gender differences in body language



CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN CONFLICTS

- Bias, stereotypes, prejudice, racism, other “isms” are believed to be present
- Conflicting views of events, motives & behaviors based on diverse viewpoints
- Rejection of persons or their ideas; input rejected because is not valued



CULTURAL CONFLICT STYLES

- Be nice! Deal with it?
- Control anger? Express it! Save face?
- Body Language—High or low touch? Stand close or far away from others?
- Argument—Avoid? Use as a learning tool?
- Personal Style—Low or high energy? Intimate or detached? Other?



CULTURAL CONFLICT STYLES

- Timing—deal with it now, later or not at all. Wait for calm? Deal with it now to prevent escalation? Wait for things to work themselves out?
- Silence—Valued? Distrusted?
- Ideas—Are us? Are separate?
- Emotions—Self separate from emotions? Connected to self?
- Language—Low/high key? Code words?



WHAT NOT TO DO IN A CONFLICT

- Use the power of your personal position or group to punish, threaten, dominate, or guilt the other person
- Blame or shame the other person for the conflict
- Patronize or dismiss the other person's concerns
- Call others names like “sexist,” “racist”. “You are a sexist, you wouldn't understand!” etc.
Describe behavior and explain why you interpret that behavior as sexist or racist.



WHAT NOT TO DO IN A CONFLICT

- Break the confidentiality agreement by telling others about resolution discussions or discussing the conflict
- Yell or shout at others
- Walk away (unless personal safety is an issue) before resolving the issue or setting another time to work on the problem.



RESOLVING A CONFLICT--GETTING STARTED

Set Ground Rules to establish expectations for respectful behavior and confidentiality, establish boundaries and focus discussion.

If a person or group does not agree to basic Ground Rules, chaos may ensue. Ask what he/she or they need in order to proceed with respect and safety. You may need a trained mediator with cultural specific skills.



GETTING STARTED

GROUND RULES

- Respect Others
- Listen Actively
- Be accountable
- Take Risks
- Be Open
- Q-Tip—Quit taking things too personally



GETTING STARTED

What Do We Want?

- Ask each person to **describe his or her desired outcome** for this disagreement. What would each person want to have happen?
- What is negotiable?
- What is non-negotiable?



GETTING STARTED

WHAT ARE OUR FEELINGS?

Ask each person to **describe his or her feelings at the time of each event** (for example: “When you told that joke, I felt embarrassed.”)

- Listen carefully and non-defensively to information about each person’s behavior.
- Describe and take ownership for your feelings without blaming the other person for “making me feel that way”



GETTING STARTED

- Ask group members to examine the power and rejection issues present in this conflict. These issues may be overt or covert.
- Has the conflict left anyone feeling powerless? Why?
- Has anyone's ideas or feelings been ignored or rejected? Why?



SOLVING CONFLICT

How do we find solutions?

- Ask participant/s to **divide the conflict into its basic or essential parts**, otherwise, conflicts are overwhelming.
- Ask participant/s to **propose solutions or interventions for each basic or essential part of the conflict**. In the search for the best solutions, don't overlook the simple apology. “Win-win” solutions empower all parties.



FINDING SOLUTIONS

- What personal work is needed? What do I need to learn, change, or do differently?
- What organizational work is needed? Who will drive the needed changes?
- Choose the best solution/s and make a written record of what has been agreed to and any future conduct or course of actions.

CREATING A CONFLICT RESOLUTION CULTURE



- What organizational work is needed? Who will drive the needed changes?
- What can I do to help lead the change?