

# Conflict Resolution

It is inevitable that in community conflict will arise. Whether the conflict affects you directly or not, these conflict resolution steps can be an effective way to achieve reconciliation. Remember that the goal of conflict resolution is to find a solution that is acceptable to everyone, and that it is about a relationship, not about blame or who is right or wrong. If you are angry or upset, do not start conflict resolution steps, give space and wait for a more appropriate time.

The Steps in Conflict Resolution are:

## 1. Identifying and Defining the Conflict

Find an appropriate time and place when the other person is willing and able to get involved in solving the problem.

Tell them clearly and concisely the problem to be solved, the feelings you have, the needs you feel are not being met. Use “I” messages. Avoid messages that blame or put down the other person.

Be clear that you want them to join you in finding a solution acceptable to both parties.

## 2. Generating Possible Solutions.

Encourage the other person, and yourself to generate a number of solutions.

Do not evaluate, judge, or belittle any of the solutions offered.

At this point, try not to make any statements conveying that any of the solutions offered would be unacceptable to you.

Keep generating solutions until it looks as though no more are going to be suggested.

## 3. Evaluating the Solutions

With the other person, find the better solutions.

Talk through each solution – so that you both understand its likely consequence.

Throw out those unacceptable to either person.

## 4. Deciding on the Best Solution

Keep testing the remaining solutions.

Don't think of a decision as necessarily final or impossible to change

If the solution involves a number of points, it's a good idea to write them down so they won't be forgotten.

Make certain it is clearly understood that you are both making a commitment to carry out the decision.

## 5. Implementing the Decision

Decide who does what.

Determine when you begin.

## 6. Follow-up Evaluation

Check back to see if you are both satisfied with the decision and that the solution is working.

Make any necessary modifications as needed.

If you can't find a solution:

1. Keep talking.
2. Go back to step 2 and generate more solutions
3. Hold over the conflict until another session the next day.
4. Go back to step 1, identifying the problem, and try find if there is an underlying problem or hidden agenda obstructing the process.

If these steps are not working, at any time bring in an appropriate mediator. Go up and not out with conflict.

- When you are not directly part of the conflict encourage the people involved to act using the steps of conflict resolution.
- Act as a mediator if appropriate.
- Encourage and model respectful behaviour and language.
- Be sure you are not taking sides.
- Do not "fix" the problem yourself, encourage, mediate and empower those involved to resolve the conflict themselves.
- If necessary and appropriate, encourage those involved to bring in a different
- Negotiator.
- Check back in with everyone involved to see how the solution is working.