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# How to resolve conflict

The ultimate guide to resolving  
conflict positively at work



If you think about it, conflict is a natural part of day-to-day life. It's normal, healthy and... inevitable.

But so many people are really bad at managing it. The thought of addressing something or confronting someone really stresses people out.

And, if you do pluck up the courage to address it, you probably handle it in the wrong way, everything gets heated, people get sad and the whole situation blows up in your face.

*This doesn't need to be the case...conflict doesn't have to be stressful.*

Using the right techniques, you can address any sort of conflict calmly and get it resolved quickly, without any upset, so that everyone can crack on with what they do best.

**This guide is your starting point. Let's begin.**



## There are three types of conflict at work:

### Conflict type 1: Interpersonal

This type of conflict happens between people. This may be between you, the employer, and one of your staff members, or between employees themselves. There can be any cause for this type of conflict (as you well know) such as a difference in personality, opinion, and values.

### Conflict type 2: Organisational

This type of conflict happens between groups or cohorts of individuals, based on their shared responsibilities. Take two departments at work for instance, the sales team might be angry and feel as though the marketing team haven't supported them correctly. Or you might have individuals that are frustrated with management about pay or working conditions.

### Conflict type 3: Role

We've all heard of an employee stating, "I don't get paid for this" or "this isn't my job role". This type of conflict happens when there's a disagreement about job responsibilities or expectations.

**Understanding the different types of conflict is essential if you want to manage them effectively.**

# How to manage conflict step-by-step...



## **Step 1:** **Understand what's causing the conflict**

First, it's important to understand what's causing the conflict and you can do this by having a formal or informal conversation with the people involved to hear their side of the story.

If it's between two people, or different parties, it's probably better to do this on a 121 basis so they feel it's a safe place to share what they think is going on.

## **Step 2:** **Provide a safe space to talk**

To help you understand the cause of the conflict, it's important for you to create a safe space where colleagues can discuss issues without any recourse.

## **Step 3:** **Listen, impartially**

As someone managing the conflict, your first job is to be impartial and to listen.

The more you listen, and the more the people involved in the conflict feel heard, the greater your chances of resolving the conflict will be.

## **Step 4:** **Investigate**

Once you've heard both version of events, you may need to take some time to investigate and think about the best course of reconciliation.

## **Step 5:** **Create a common goal**

When you bring both parties together to resolve the conflict, it's important to set a common goal that everyone agrees on first. This could be "Create a happy working environment for everyone" or "Working together to achieve X, Y, Z".

## **Step 6:** **Agree on what individual actions are required to achieve a common goal**

Together, you can then decide on what needs to happen practically for both parties to be happy and for them to achieve the common goal. It's important for these actions to be clear, recorded, and accountable.

## **Step 7:** **Keep an eye on how things are going**

Once you have an action plan in place, it's important to keep an eye on how things are going with regular check-in meetings. This could be daily or weekly depending on the severity of the issue.

# Okay, so that's a very basic outline of how to handle conflict. But what about people's emotions?

Emotions are sometimes uncontrollable (and this is perfectly okay) and can affect how you and your team handle certain situations.

If you need to address or confront an individual about a situation, you don't want to be stressed out doing it which is why it might be helpful to know some techniques on how to stay calm and professional.

It would also be beneficial if you knew how to manage your employee's emotions. And if your team knew how to handle theirs.

Emotional intelligence training is a great idea for you and your team as it will arm you with techniques to handle any type of conflict you may face in the future.

Get in touch with us to learn more and we can help you find a specialist training provider in this field.

## **What happens when you can't resolve the conflict yourself? Mediation is your answer...**

If you can't handle the situation yourself or it's too complicated, mediation is a great way to manage it.

It's a voluntary process that involves bringing in a neutral third-party mediator to facilitate a discussion between the parties involved. The mediator's role is to help the parties reach a mutually acceptable solution to the conflict.

### **Here are some of the key benefits of mediation:**

- It's cost-effective
- It's Confidential
- It can be quick and efficient
- It preserves relationships
- It empowers individuals
- It adheres to employment law

### **Need help?**

If you need help with any of the issues raised in this guide, we're here to help.

Get in touch, let's have a confidential chat and we'll help you get it sorted.



# NEED SOME EXPERT HR ADVICE?

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