



Academic Leadership Support

Office of Quality Improvement & Office of Human Resource Development



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8 Steps: Overview

The following process is useful for effectively managing conflict in your workplace, in relationships, or in other situations where you have an interest in seeking a negotiated solution. These steps won't guarantee an agreement, but they greatly improve the likelihood that the problems can be understood, solutions explored, and consideration of the advantages of a negotiated agreement can occur within a relatively constructive environment. They provide useful strategies to consider that reduce the impacts of stress, fears and "surprise" factors involved in dealing with conflict.

1. Know Thyself" and Take Care of Self
 - Understand your "perceptual filters," biases, triggers
 - Create a personally affirming environment (eat, sleep, exercise)
2. Clarify Personal Needs Threatened by the Dispute
 - Substantive, Procedural, and Psychological Needs
 - Look at BATNA, WATNA, and MLATNA
 - Identify "Desired Outcomes" from a Negotiated Process
3. Identify a Safe Place for Negotiation
 - Appropriate Space for Discussion/ Private and Neutral
 - Mutual Consent to Negotiate/ Appropriate Time
 - Role of Support People (Facilitators, Mediators, Advocates), as needed
 - Agreement to Ground rules
4. Take a Listening Stance into the Interaction
 - "Seek first to understand, then to be understood" (Covey)
 - Use Active Listening skills

5. Assert Your Needs Clearly and Specifically
 - Use "I-messages" as tools for clarification
 - Build from what you have heard - continue to listen well

6. Approach Problem-Solving with Flexibility
 - Identify Issues Clearly and Concisely
 - Generate Options (Brainstorm), While Deferring Judgment
 - Be open to "tangents" and other problem definitions
 - Clarify Criteria for Decision-Making

7. Manage Impasse with Calm, Patience, and Respect
 - Clarify Feelings
 - Focus on Underlying Needs, Interests, and Concerns
 - Take a structured break, as needed

8. Build an Agreement that Works
 - Review "Hallmarks" of a Good Agreement
 - Implement and Evaluate - Live and Learn

Article courtesy of Office of Human Resource Development University of Wisconsin-Madison and Harry Webne-Behrman located at <http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/stepsoverview.htm>

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