

UW-L Leadership Briefs

Conflict should be viewed as positive rather than negative because conflict promotes communication, problem solving, and necessary change.



Styles of Conflict Management

- **Competing:** Individual pursues his/her interests at other's expense.
- **Accommodating:** Individual neglects his/her own interests to satisfy another.
- **Compromising:** Individual seeks to find expedient, mutually acceptable solution.
- **Avoidance:** Characterized by non-assertive, passive behavior. Person does not openly pursue his/her own concerns or those of the other person, and refuses to engage openly in the conflict. May change the subject or withdraw from the issue.
- **Collaboration:** Individual seeks to find solution which fully satisfies both parties.
- **Collaboration** is the best style for student organizations because it satisfies both parties, allows for creativity in developing resolution, and it gives participants a sense of accomplishment that they have together resolved an issue without losing anything. Steps for collaboration include:
 - Determine the nature of the conflict. Is it a philosophical difference or a difference of expectations?
 - State the real effect the conflict has on you.
 - Listen carefully to the other people. What are the real effects on them? What do they see as the conflict?
 - Initiate the problem solving process:
 - Clarify the issue - What is the real problem/issue at hand?
 - Discuss each person's wants and needs.
 - Generate a list of all possible solutions - Be creative.
 - Decide together on the solution most acceptable to both parties.
 - Discuss how solution will be implemented.
 - Develop process to evaluate solution after a specific time.
 - Discuss how discrepancies/problems with solution will be handled.
- **Know Yourself**
 - Identify your own conflict style
 - Identify the types of situations or people that make you angry
 - Be aware of your "down times"
 - Take care of yourself





- **Two Special Issues in Conflict Resolution**

- Dealing with the non-negotiators

- Some individuals will refuse to negotiate because they want to protect their interests. Here are a few pointers for dealing with them:

- Start to negotiate anyway
 - Explain why it is in their interest to negotiate
 - Talk about how resolving the issue will help them
 - Make the issue important to them

- Dealing with the non-trusting

- Some individuals simply can't/won't trust you. But do your best! Consider the following:
 - Find something that you both agree on
 - Listen carefully to their issues/concerns
 - Start small - don't be discouraged if you can't resolve all the issues at once

- **Causes of Conflict**

- Prior Hostility: We sometimes get mad in one situation but express it in another.
 - Assumptions or Expectations: We often get frustrated when situations or people are not what we expect. This type of frustration can easily lead to angry feelings and conflict.
 - Violating another person's needs: Each of us has a variety of needs, to feel competent, in control, accepted, independent. When these needs are violated you may see aggressiveness, defensiveness, rejection, withdrawal, and lack of communication.

- **Value Differences**: Ultimately we may come to real value differences. There is a difference in how you want to live and how I want to live. We have three choices here:

- One or both of us could change
 - We could stop having a relationship and/or stop communicating
 - We could tolerate each other and learn to appreciate what we do have in common, we could co-exist the way we are knowing that we will always have that basic difference.

- **Six Rules For Conflict Mediation**

1. Never take sides
2. When possible, use a win-win strategy
3. Help ensure that personal integrity is maintained
4. Get conflicts into the open

5. Be aware of barriers to conflict resolution (defensiveness, put-downs, manipulation)
6. Do not involve more people than necessary