

## Skillful Conflict Resolution

### 14 Considerations for Your Conversation

#### 1. Embrace Conflict - Be real

Recognize that conflict is a natural part of ongoing relationships. It signifies a need for change and presents opportunities for growth, understanding, and improved communication. Address conflict directly and respectfully with the relevant individuals involved.

#### 2. Provide a Calming Presence

Whether supporting a colleague or dealing with a personal conflict, your response can either escalate or diminish its intensity. Offer an objective and neutral viewpoint, and collaborate on strategies to achieve a resolution with the other party.

#### 3. Practice Active Listening - Communicate with HEART

Take time to process your emotions, identify the specific problem, and understand its impact on you. Use "I"-based statements to express your feelings, describe the behaviour objectively, explain the consequences, and express your desired outcome for future prevention.

#### 4. Analyze the conflict

Gain clarity by examining the triggers, identifying the source of anger, understanding unmet needs, and recognizing potential losses. Assess the accuracy of your conflict and explore possible resolutions.

#### 5. Use neutral language

Replace inflammatory and demeaning language with more objective expressions. Be conscious of your tone, volume and body language. This reduces emotional tension and fosters productive discussions for the future.

#### 6. Separate the person from the problem

Rather than assigning negative feelings to the entire person, focus on the specific behaviour or circumstances causing the conflict. This approach makes the problem more manageable and promotes a sense of hope.

#### 7. Be Specific

When problem-solving, provide clear and precise details. If using a code of conduct or similar tools, ensure everyone comprehends each point and clarifies any ambiguous terms that may lead to differing interpretations.

#### 8. Collaborate and take ownership - Create a shared pool of meaning

Shift away from blaming others and instead commit to working together. Embrace active listening and mutual understanding as you jointly seek solutions for the conflict.



"For good ideas and true innovation, you need human interaction, conflict, argument, debate."

- Margaret Heffernan

**For change to happen, conflict is inevitable.**

Nothing in this world, good or bad, has changed without conflict initiating the discussion.

Dealing with conflict is crucial for fostering a workplace culture that upholds respect and cooperation. Failure to address conflicts may result in increased anxiety, stress, and a negative work atmosphere, ultimately leading to professional burnout.

In healthcare settings, unresolved conflicts often hinder effective communication among health professionals, impacting their performance and potentially causing harm to patients. These consequences can include; disruptions in continuity of care, delayed diagnoses, unnecessary testing, iatrogenic complications, frustrated staff and patients, and the development of unsafe workarounds. As a result, providers may face an elevated risk of liability.

## Helpful Resources:

- [Refer to the BE REAL Policy for guidance.](#)
- Refer to Crucial Conversations for further learning via [KnowledgeNow](#)
- Speak with your Manager to discuss the situation and receive guidance on how to approach the individual
- Connect with Leadership & Talent Development, KGH ext. 4533 for further support and professional development opportunities
- Seek support or guidance regarding effective communication with the Organizational Development Advisor, KGH ext. 7457
- Seek support or guidance regarding psychological wellness and safety from your Workplace Mental Wellness Practitioner, KGH ext. 6784
- Seek support or guidance regarding ethical conflict matters from your Ethicist, KGH ext. 8146
- Helpful Articles:
  - Dealing with Conflict:



- Transitions in Care:



- On KHSC Now intranet Ethic Blogs: [Matters that Matter- Identifying, analyzing, and weighing competing values.](#)
- [Principle-based decision-making: The ASSIST decision making guide](#)
- [Employee Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\), Homewood Health 1-800-663-1142.](#) Accessing the website for the first time? Log in with the [Customer Account Name: Kingston Health Sciences Centre and Invitation Code: KHS141](#)



### 9. Accept differences

Acknowledge that individuals have unique perspectives and rarely agree on every detail. Seeking an absolute truth can hinder conflict resolution. Instead, concentrate on common interests and understand that truth is relative to each person's viewpoint. This provides an opportunity for collaboration leading to innovative solutions

### 10. Look to the Future

While it's important to address past conflict, avoid dwelling on them excessively. Take ownership of the present conflict and develop a plan to manage it effectively, as well as future conflicts that may arise.

### 11. Moving Beyond positions

Positions represent desired outcomes in a conflict and often lead to deadlock. To achieve a resolution, all parties must move past their initial positions and focus on underlying interests.

### 12. Share interests

You can engage in open discussions about each person's interests behind their positions. You can work together to find a mutually satisfying solution by understanding and addressing these interests. These interests may include tangible needs like exercise, movies or books, and intangible desires such as respect, belonging, friendship, and fun.

### 13. Foster creativity

Finding a resolution that satisfies everyone requires creativity and effort. Avoid simply giving in to maintain harmony. Generate innovative options and think outside the box of original positions to discover mutually beneficial solutions.

### 14. Maintain Confidentiality

Encourage individuals in conflict to address the issue directly and respectfully with the involved party. Avoid spreading rumours or venting to others, as this escalates conflicts and fuels gossip. If rumours are already circulating, support the person in devising a plan to stop the spread. Play your part in quelling rumours and promoting a healthier resolution process.

#### References:

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