

Managing Resistance with a High Conflict Person



“It seems that most people need to experience a great deal of suffering before they will relinquish resistance and accept - before they will forgive.”
– Eckhart Tolle

Managing resistance with a high-conflict person is crucial for promoting psychological health and safety in various settings.

High-conflict individuals often exhibit resistance to change, which can lead to heightened stress and strained relationships.

By proactively addressing and managing resistance, individuals contribute to a healthier psychological environment. This approach involves understanding the root causes of resistance, empathizing with the concerns of the high-conflict person, and fostering open communication. Effectively managing resistance not only prevents escalating conflicts but also establishes a foundation for collaboration, reducing the risk of burnout and fostering a sense of security and well-being within the interpersonal dynamics.

Dealing with resistance from a high conflict person can definitely be challenging. Here are some practical tips for dealing with resistance from high conflict people:

1. Acknowledge their feelings

High conflict people are often resistant to change because they feel unheard or dismissed. By acknowledging their feelings, you can help to deescalate the situation and reduce their resistance. For example, if a high conflict person is resistant to a suggestion you have made, you can say "I understand that you feel strongly about this, and I respect your opinion."

2. Use empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. By using empathy, you can help to build rapport with a high conflict person and reduce their resistance. For example, if a high conflict person is resistant to a change you are proposing, you can say "I can imagine how difficult this change might be for you, but I think it will ultimately benefit both of us."

3. Find common ground

Finding common ground is a powerful technique for reducing resistance from high conflict people. By identifying areas of agreement, you can help to build rapport and reduce their resistance. For example, if a high conflict person is resistant to a change you are proposing, you can say "I understand that we both want what is best for this situation, let's work together to find a solution that benefits everyone."

4. Avoid power struggles

Power struggles with high conflict people only escalate resistance, so it's important to avoid them. Instead, try to find a solution that benefits everyone and avoid taking a confrontational approach. For example, instead of saying "I'm right and you're wrong!" try saying "What do you think would be the best solution for this situation?"

5. Take a break

If resistance from a high conflict person becomes too intense, taking a break from the situation can help to de-escalate it. This can give you time to cool down and reflect on the situation, and it can also give the high conflict person time to calm down. For example, if a high conflict person is becoming increasingly resistant, you can say "I think we both need some time to think about this, let's continue this discussion later."

6. Seek support

If you are having trouble dealing with resistance from a high conflict person, consider seeking outside support from your manager, HR, or Occupational Health staff. They can provide guidance and support to help you navigate the situation effectively. By following these steps and techniques, you can create change in the workplace and reduce resistance from high conflict people.