

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

How do I manage conflict in a positive way?

Conflict is a healthy and normal part of relationships and interactions. It is important to understand how to manage the conflicts in a healthy and positive way so there is no harm to the relationship. When conflict is handled well, it can provide opportunities for growth and can sometimes strengthen a relationship.

Conflict Management Styles

There are different styles when approaching conflict. To most effectively resolve a conflict, it is important to use the style and strategy that is most appropriate for that situation.

Accommodating

- ◆ An individual focuses on the human relationships and neglects their own concerns to meet the needs of the other person.
- ◆ Advantage: Accommodating helps maintain relationships.
- ◆ Disadvantage: Giving in may not be the best solution or productive.

Avoiding

- ◆ An individual prefers to ignore the conflict than resolve it. Tends to give up on personal goals.
- ◆ Advantage: May help maintain relationships that could be hurt by conflict resolution.
- ◆ Disadvantage: Conflict stays unsolved, can lead to others walking over the individual.

Collaborating

- ◆ Attempt to work with others on finding a solution that works for both parties involved.
- ◆ Advantage: Both sides have a solution they are happy with and there are no negative feelings.
- ◆ Disadvantage: Collaborating is very time consuming and takes a lot of effort.

Competing

- ◆ An individual focuses on their own concerns over the others.
- ◆ Advantage: If it is the best decision the competing style will lead to a better decision.
- ◆ Disadvantage: May lead to hostility and resentment toward the person using the competing style.

Compromising

- ◆ An individual is willing to sacrifice some of their goals while convincing others to give up some of their goals as well.
- ◆ Advantage: Relationships are maintained and conflicts are removed.
- ◆ Disadvantage: Compromise may create less than ideal outcomes.

Reflection: What conflict management style do you typically use and how does it work?

Style:

Advantages:

Disadvantages:



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Tips for managing & resolving conflict

1. **Make the relationship your priority.** Maintaining the relationship should be your first priority, not winning the argument. Listen and respect the other person's viewpoint.
2. **Focus on the present.** Don't hold on to old issues and resentment, your ability to see the current situation will be impaired. Focus on the here and now to solve the problem.
3. **Pick your battles.** Think about if the issue is worth the time and energy that it will take to resolve the conflict.
4. **Know when to let something go.** It is okay to agree to disagree on some issues. If you are not making any strides forward with the conflict, you can choose to let it go and move on.

Next time there is a conflict answer the following questions to help you decide which style is the best to approach the issue.

What is the issue? _____

What is the relationship with the person that you are having the conflict? _____

Which is more important, the relationship, the issue or both? _____

How much time do you have to resolve the conflict? _____

Is this an issue that I can "let go" or is it something I need focus on? _____

Once you have answered these questions, look at the other side and decide which conflict management style you think would be best used for your current situation.

I am going to use _____ conflict management style for this situation.

Finally, please recall a recent conflict you have experienced. When you have an example, please complete the previous prompts again for your own personal experience. How would you use the skills you have learned to handle the situation better? _____

RESOURCES

University Counseling Service

3223 Westlawn South

319-335-7294

ucs@uiowa.edu

<http://counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu/>

Academic Support & Retention

310 Calvin Hall

319-335-1497

tutoriowa@uiowa.edu

<http://tutor.uiowa.edu>

Works Cited:

www.edcc.edu/counseling/documents/conflict.pdf

Leadership.uoregon.edu/resources/exercises_tips/skills/managing_conflict