

Conflict Resolution

The ability to resolve conflict is one of the most important skills a leader can possess. Conflicts arise in everyday situations between leaders and members over both organizational and personal issues. Most conflicts typically occur between people and policies or people and other people.

Styles of Conflict Management

Competing

Individual pursues his/her interests at another's expense. Forms include standing up for one's rights, defending one's position or belief, or trying to win.

Accommodating

Individual neglects his/her own interests to satisfy another. Forms include sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until another or better time, or withdrawing from the situation

Compromising

Individual seeks to find an expedient, mutually acceptable solution which somewhat satisfies both parties' needs. Forms include splitting the difference, exchanging concessions, or seeking mutual ground.

Collaboration

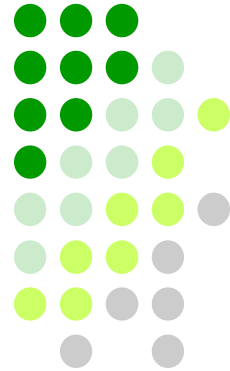
Individual seeks to find solution that fully satisfies both parties.

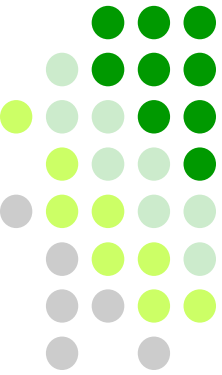
Collaboration is the style most recommended for student organizations because it allows both parties to be fully satisfied. It allows for creativity in developing resolution, and it gives participants a sense of accomplishment that they together have resolved the issue without losing anything. Here are the steps for collaboration:

1. Determine the nature of the conflict. Is it a philosophical issue or a difference of expectations? (All members of the group should determine every decision that the group makes)
2. State the real effect the conflict has on you. An example: If all members get to vote on everything, it will take us a long time to make decisions and some things may not get done since we only meet once a month.
3. Listen carefully to the other person. What is the real effect on him/her? What does he/she see as the conflict?
4. 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 the solution will be implemented.
 - Develop a process to evaluate the solution after specified time.
 - Discuss how discrepancies/problems with solutions will be handled.

Conflict Mediation Model

1. Problem recognition
2. Problem definition
3. Commitment
4. Highlighting pleasing and displeasing behaviors
5. Negotiation
6. Contracting
7. Follow-up





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 Non-Trusting

Some individuals simply can't or won't trust you. But do your best! Take these tips into consideration:

- Be trustworthy
- Find something you can both agree on. Example: You both want the program to be successful
- Listen carefully to their issues/concerns
- Start small; don't be discouraged if you can't resolve all the issues at once

Be Proactive

Include conflict resolution exercises in your organization retreats and workshops. Discuss the issue at a meeting. Conflict resolution is a skill all members of the organization could benefit from mastering.

Adapted from the University of Michigan, Student Organization Development Center Handout