

*Tips on ...***Resolving conflict in the workplace**

Conflict will occur wherever groups of people work together. In a personal situation where we try to overcome conflict we can become passive and withdraw from the problem, be aggravating and make it worse, or get stuck in and find a solution. So what practical measures can be taken to overcome conflict between colleagues? Six basic steps can help those managing the conflict.

- Summarise the situation—Firstly, someone needs to sum up what the conflict seems to be about by taking accounts from the parties in conflict. The person assessing the conflict must not take sides. Even at this early stage it needs to be stressed that conflict is unproductive
- Get the facts—Once you have collected the opposing accounts, get the individuals concerned to confirm any information collected. Amend and adapt as necessary. This will help define positions and facilitate a consistent understanding
- Establish the last point of agreement—This will pinpoint the salient issues and stop the conflict from becoming too generalised. Let all interested parties have their say and ensure that the different points of view are clarified. Listen carefully as there may be more agreement than each side thinks
- Create a shared vision—Ask all parties to explain what it is that they want
- Generate ideas—Facilitate a brainstorming session where the parties can identify potential solutions to the problem
- Get agreement—Finally, get an agreement from all parties to assess and implement a solution. This is harder in practice than it is in theory. The person trying to reduce situational conflict should have good interpersonal skills, demonstrate empathetic qualities, and be able to accept that the other person's view may well be right. Above all, he or she needs to develop the ability to stand back and make an overall assessment

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