

# The 6 Steps to Conflict Resolution

Anderson County Communication & Conflict Resolution Training Series

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Adapted from SHRM "Conflict Resolution" Training

# Objectives

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- Understand workplace conflict
- Understand why conflict resolution is important
- Identify the 6 Steps to Conflict Resolution
- Effectively utilize the 6 steps to bring resolution to conflict in the workplace

# What is Workplace Conflict?

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Workplace conflict is defined as two or more people having opposing views on the same issue.

Examples include disagreements and individuals who dislike one another or do not get along.

Conflict can also be caused by a failure to communicate or a miscommunication.



# Why is Conflict Resolution Important?

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Conflict can lead to negative consequences in the workplace if it is not resolved.

Individuals not involved in the conflict either “pile on” or withdraw from the conflict.

- This requires individuals to take sides or “check out” from work entirely.
- Morale and productivity is lowered because individuals are focused on the conflict.
- Individuals who work in teams are now divided because of the conflict.

In extreme instances, unresolved conflict can lead to violent or aggressive situations.

- Potential for individuals to become injured.
- There are legal risks associated with violent situations in the workplace.
- Work will slow dramatically or can halt altogether.

## 6 Steps to Conflict Resolution Overview

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1. Clarify what the disagreement is.
2. Establish a common goal for both parties.
3. Discuss ways to meet the common goal.
4. Determine the barriers to the common goal.
5. Agree on the best way to resolve the conflict.
6. Acknowledge the agreed solution and determine the responsibilities each party has in the resolution.

This process should be completed by *all* parties in the conflict together.

*(“Conflict Resolution Skills for HR Professionals” by Marla Bradley)*

# Step 1

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## Clarify what the disagreement is.

Clarifying involves getting to the heart of the conflict.

The goal of this step is to get both sides to agree on what the disagreement is.

### Tips:

Discuss what needs are not being met on both sides of the conflict.  
Ensure mutual understanding.

Obtain as much information as possible on each side's point of view.

Continue to ask questions until you are certain that you, and each side of the conflict understand the issue.

# Step 2

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## **Establish a common goal for both parties.**

In this step of the process, both sides agree on the desired outcome of the conflict.

### Tips:

Discuss what each party would like to see happen.

Find a commonality in both sides as a starting point for a shared outcome. That commonality can be as simple as “both sides want to end the conflict.”

# Step 3

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## **Discuss ways to meet the common goal.**

Both sides work together to discuss ways that they can meet the goal they agreed upon in step 2.

### Tips:

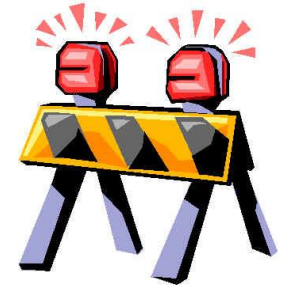
Brainstorm different approaches to meet the goal.

Discuss until all the options are exhausted.



# Step 4

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## **Determine the barriers to the common goal.**

In this step of the process, the two parties acknowledge what has brought them into the conflict.

### Tips:

Ask: “If we could have the outcome that we both wanted, how would that look?”

Define what can and cannot be changed about the situation.

For the items that cannot be changed, discuss ways of getting around those road blocks.

# Step 5

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## **Agree on the best way to resolve the conflict.**

Both parties come to a conclusion on the best resolution.

### Tips:

Determine a solution that both sides can live with.

Discuss the responsibility each party has in maintaining the solution.

Settle on a means of ensuring that this conflict does not arise again.

# Step 6

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## **Acknowledge the agreed solution and determine the responsibilities each party has in the resolution.**

Both sides own their responsibility in the resolution of the conflict and express aloud what they have agreed to.

### Tips:

Get both parties to acknowledge a win-win situation.

Ask both parties to use phrases such as “I agree to...” and “I acknowledge that I have responsibility for...”

# Summary

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It is important to address conflict because unresolved conflict leads to low morale, low productivity, and in extreme cases, workplace violence.

Using the 6 steps can increase conflict resolution skills and decrease negative conflict consequences.



# Conclusion

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For further assistance, please contact your Human Resources and Risk Management Department at

865-264-6300

or

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Thank You!

