



Peaceful Conflict Resolution Strategies

Internal

- **Assess your emotions and breathe to stay calm.** If you find yourself getting annoyed or angry, take a break to regain your calm
- **Stay focused on your goals.** Set an achievable goal for the interaction, and avoid getting pulled off course. It may not end in perfect harmony, but try to resolve what you can.
- **Strive for collaboration.** Try to frame the conflict as an opportunity to work with your partner-in-conflict and find a solution that works for you both
- **Know your boundaries.** Think through what your own boundaries are. Know you can re-negotiate if your boundaries change.
- **Decide when it's over.** If efforts to resolve the conflict aren't working, it may be time to end the interaction, take a break, and try again later. Or it may be time to end the friendship, quit the job, or leave the relationship.

External

- **Listen with your ears:** people get louder when they don't feel heard.
- **Listen with your body:** body language and facial expressions are key to what the other person hears. Express concern and attention by making eye contact, uncrossing arms, and keeping a neutral expression.

Verbal

- **Apologize/take responsibility** if appropriate to the situation. "I am sorry that I spilled my coffee on you." You can also apologize without taking direct responsibility: "I'm really sorry that happened to you."
- **Acknowledge their feelings** to let them know they are being heard. "I know you're really angry right now. I would be too in your situation."
- **Ask questions to gain understanding.** With a client: "I want to hear more. Can you explain the concerns you have with our policy?"
- **Repeat back your understanding** so they know you've heard them: "I heard you were upset I knocked over the plant on your desk because it was a special gift. Is that correct?"
- **Say what you can do right now.** "I am sorry I knocked over your tray of lunch food. Can I share my lunch with you? If you want another lunch, let's talk to the head of the cafeteria to see what they can do to help."
- **Move toward a resolution,** knowing that you sometimes cannot solve the situation: To a roommate: "I am sorry that I forgot to mail the rent check. I will drop it off in the morning and explain my mistake to the landlord."

De-Escalation and Conflict Resolution

If de-escalation is about responding to a crisis, then conflict resolution addresses the idea that small forms build – someone may not be escalated to such a state that they're threatening (or perpetrating) violence, but still be in conflict with you. Resolving conflict prevents violence, because unresolved conflict will fester and can grow and even develop into violent confrontation if not addressed.