



Center for Dispute Resolution and Restorative Justice

Communication Tips for Resolving Conflict

Conflicts will arise. It's part of being human. However, we can learn to resolve conflicts more effectively.

- 1. Talk directly.** Assuming that there is no threat of physical violence, talk directly to the person with whom you have the conflict. Direct conversation is more effective than sending a letter, banging on the wall, or complaining to others.
- 2. Choose a good time.** Plan to talk to the other person at the right time and allow yourselves enough time for a thorough discussion of the issue. Don't start talking about the conflict just as the other person is leaving for an appointment, after you have had a terrible day, or right before you have to make dinner. Try to talk in a quiet place where you can both be comfortable and undisturbed for as long as the discussion lasts.
- 3. Plan ahead.** Think out what you want to say ahead of time. State clearly what the problem is and how it affects you.
- 4. Don't blame or name call.** Don't blame the other person for everything or begin the conversation with your opinion of what should be done. Use responsible language (I statements such as "I feel", "I notice" vs "you made me feel").
- 5. Give information.** Don't interpret the other person's behavior or viewpoint: "You are blocking my driveway on purpose just to make me mad." Instead, give information about your own feelings: "When your car blocks my driveway, I get angry because I can't get to work on time."
- 6. Listen.** Give the other person a chance to tell his or her side of the conflict completely. Relax and listen. Try to learn how the other person feels.
- 7. Show that you are listening.** Although you may not agree with what is being said, tell the other person that you hear him or her and are glad that you are discussing the issue together.
- 8. Talk it all through.** Once you start, get all of the issues and feelings out into the open. Don't leave out the part that seems too "difficult to discuss" or too "insignificant" to be important. Your solution will work best if all issues are discussed thoroughly.
- 9. Work on a solution.** Two or more people cooperating are much more effective than one person telling another to change. Be specific with your solutions. "I will turn my music off at midnight" is better than a vague, "I won't play loud music again."
- 10. Follow through.** Agree to check with each other at specific times to make sure that the agreement is still working.

resolvecenter.org • (541) 770 - 2468

1237 N. Riverside Avenue, Suite 25, Medford, Oregon 97501