



## A Study on Conflict Management Skills and Strategies

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**Abstract:** *The practice of preventing conflict in the workplace and having a management team that can successfully handle and resolve workplace difficulties is known as conflict management or conflict resolution. This study focuses on conflict management skills, conflict resolution strategies, and best practices for conflict resolution. Conflict management is the intentional handling of tense circumstances, whether to defuse them or intensify them. This paper looks into tips to improve conflict resolution.*

**Keywords:** *Conflict management skills, conflict resolution strategies, Active listening, emotional intelligence, positivity.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION :

**Conflict Resolution:** According to APA, the lessening of tension and conflict between people or organizations, is typical via the employment of proactive tactics like conciliation, negotiation, and bargaining. Also, see resolving disputes constructively. The peaceful resolution of a dispute between two or more parties is possible through conflict resolution. A disagreement of opinion could be motivated by emotions, money, politics, or personal relationships. When a problem arises, negotiation is frequently the best course of action. In psychology, conflict is defined as the activation of two or more compelling impulses that cannot be reconciled. For instance, a young child might wish to attend a dance to feel like he belongs to a group and follows his friends' lead. That is a compelling reason for a teenager in Western culture.

**Conflict Management:** Conflict management, as opposed to conflict behavior, includes cognitive reactions to conflict circumstances that might range from being very competitive to being highly cooperative. The process of identifying and resolving problems in an equitable and effective manner is referred to as conflict management. The goal is to increase the chance that a good resolution will occur while reducing any potential adverse impacts that may be brought about by conflicts.

### 2. The Objectives of the study :

- To study conflict Management skills and conflict resolution strategies.
- To provide suggestions for best practices for conflict resolution.
- To provide tips to improve conflict resolution.

### 3. Conflict Management Skills :

The technique of managing conflicts can take many different forms. These strategies all employ the same management techniques despite their differences. To effectively handle conflict, you must practice each of these skills and learn when to apply them. The following is a list of the basic skills and qualities you need to cultivate in order to manage disputes at work.

#### Active listening

Paying attentive attention to what the other person is saying is the secret to active listening. Any experienced professional should be able to employ this competency, though salesmen usually use it to connect with customers more effectively during a pitch. The most crucial thing you can do to improve your active listening skills is to keep an open mind (as well as open ears!). Take attention to how the other person is expressing things to do this. Then, reply in language similar to theirs. This demonstrates your attention to detail and helps clear up any confusion you may have about the subjects being covered. Additionally, keep in mind to make any things you're confused about explicit and focus on learning what the other person wants.



### **Emotional Intelligence**

The capacity to recognize and comprehend your own feelings as well as those of other people is referred to as emotional intelligence. This skill is essential for managing conflicts since it prevents things from getting worse. If you are able to precisely understand your opponent's feelings, it will be much easier to speak with them without offending them. Everyone concerned may think sensibly and creatively about a solution when perplexity, rage, and irritation related to the disagreement are acknowledged and contained.

### **Patience**

Conflicts are rarely simple to resolve. If there were, "conflict resolution" wouldn't be the subject of 22,000 monthly web searches. Conflict resolution is difficult because people typically stick to their positions on issues because they don't like to be proven wrong. If you want to resolve a disagreement with someone like this, you'll need to be patient. Even if the solution seems obvious, it's important to keep in mind that the issue could not be remedied right away. Give each speaker their appropriate amount of time, and give each argument equal weight. Even though the answer is evident, rushing to judgment might cause people to feel left out of the decision-making process. (However, there is one exception to this generalization.) It might assist to establish a long-term solution that will spare you headaches later if you take the time to carefully weigh all of your options now.

### **Impartiality**

As a result of people's tendency to divert their focus from the underlying issue, conflicts can be difficult to resolve. There may be times when the disagreement offers a forum for airing long-standing grievances that have developed between the parties over time. It is impossible to improve the current condition until the previous issues are resolved. In this kind of circumstance, it is advisable to keep the persons involved and the conflict apart. Don't concentrate your attention on individuals and their peculiarities. Instead, concentrate on the current problem and your quest for a solution. Put the current issue above those from the past, even though it might be required to address those previous issues at some point. Remember the difference between urgent and vital. But you can wait until you've dealt with the pressing issues before tackling the bigger issues that are holding you back from reaching your objectives.

### **Positivity**

If no one is pleased with the solution, it is difficult to reach a consensus. A half-hearted compromise, even if you do accept it, won't inspire you to genuinely uphold your end of the contract. This can even give someone a reason to avoid dealing with the problem at all. Using constructive conflict management tactics is a great way to keep the conversation open during a conflict. Conflicts are rife with obstacles, so if you want a resolution, you must be ready to overcome them. If you approach the debate with a positive attitude, those participants who might be uncomfortable with the conversation will feel more at ease.

### **Open communication**

Relationships between the persons involved don't always improve when a problem is resolved. This relationship must be maintained once a solution has been found in order to prevent new issues. The best strategy for fostering a strong, lasting connection after a fight is to open up lines of communication between the parties. This makes it possible for both parties to monitor one another and ensure that the provisions of the agreement are being observed. A history of open communication should make it simpler for participants to deal with obstacles without jeopardizing any gains they have made thus far. It's critical to comprehend how you can put these talents to use when a disagreement arises, even though mastering them can help you and your team handle problems and stop them from getting worse. We'll go over some of the ways you may apply these abilities to create successful dispute resolutions in the following section.

## **4. Conflict Resolution Strategies :**

Five approaches to resolving conflicts are outlined in the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Resolution Model. The five tactics are arranged along the cooperative and assertive axes. Each tactic spans the spectrum between being assertive and passive, as well as cooperative and disobedient. There is a proper time to apply each tactic; none are right or bad.

### **Establish limits.**

- Set ground rules for everyone to abide by before launching into the conflict discussion. These could consist of the following:
- pointing out that the disagreement is not personal to anyone
- I'm requesting that everyone keep this conversation private.



- putting their faith in everyone to control their emotions, refrain from harmful words, and avoid outbursts
- Invite a third party to comment.

Sometimes the conflict may just be too emotional for you to handle on your own. It may be helpful to have a third party weigh in to handle, or at least mediate, the issue on your behalf if you're worried about facing consequences for addressing conflict due to retribution, discrimination, or other improper or illegal consequences. In order to reach a conclusion, a neutral third person can either serve as a sounding board to get the pertinent information from each party, or they can simply facilitate the meeting and keep time so that you don't waste your workday engaging in fruitless conversation.

### **Accommodating**

When someone wants to be non-aggressive and helpful, they frequently adopt an accommodating manner. There are some disputes that are worth tolerating, such as those that include battles that are purposefully lost in order to win the war.

When a client or colleague complains about a procedure but not output, for instance, you might appease them. Maybe you ran a report that produced the outcomes the other party required, but it was in PDF format rather than Excel. The other individual didn't say what they preferred, but they didn't like how it was delivered. You demonstrate that you are a supportive, problem-solving team member by merely granting the request. Additionally, if you submit the accurate report on time, you'll receive bonus points.

### **Avoiding**

The avoidance approach is only appropriate for people who are more likely to lack assertiveness and cooperation in resolving conflicts. This is typically an indifferent tactic; those who use it prefer to wait for the conflict to end and then take part in it.

This approach works best for minor irritations, isolated errors, and problems that wouldn't get better if addressed. When someone uses the last of the water from the water cooler without replacing the water container, you could avert a quarrel in the office. Leave it alone if it's a one-time problem. The 2-minute all-hands meeting discussion was probably not worthwhile.

### **Collaborating**

Try using the collaborative approach to conflict resolution if you want to maintain your relationship and come up with a solution that benefits everyone. Both cooperative and forceful, this approach ensures that all stakeholders are heard and that the chosen course of action will benefit all concerned.

A procedure between two different teams is an illustration of a disagreement on which you might cooperate at work. Once the contract is closed, perhaps the sales staff needs to transfer customers to the support team, but customers aren't hearing from support for days. The two teams might work together to make the workflow more efficient. To ensure that support can meet demand, the sales team may space out the agreements that they close. The situation benefits both sides.

### **Competing**

The competitive conflict style is an aggressive method of resolving disputes. It is uncooperative and assertive. It's not unusual for opposing conflict resolution techniques to result in a win for one party and a loss for the other. You shouldn't use this tactic to make new pals, so proceed with caution.

When closing deals, you might observe a conflict management technique that is competitive. This tactic is one that attorneys may employ to benefit their client at the expense of the other party. Since it is exceedingly improbable that the attorney will come into contact with the opposing party again, there is no relationship to maintain or try to repair in the future.

### **Compromising**

When negotiating a resolution, people often compromise during confrontations when they are forceful and cooperative. Although it may sound harsh, this tactic is typically used when time is of importance and there isn't enough time to hear everyone's worries or viewpoints. The compromise is founded on the most crucial and urgent information that can result in a choice that works for the moment.

A group may come to an agreement on a plan to abruptly cancel an event due to venue problems. While it might not be the most profitable course of action, escalating the conflict only makes things worse. Thus, the best course of



action for clients, staff, and suppliers is to reach an agreement to cancel the event and resolve the remaining issues later. The next two suggestions can be used with any of the aforementioned five conflict resolution techniques to help resolve the issue.

Figure 1 shows conflict management skills.



**Figure-1**

**5. Best practices for conflict resolution :**

**Avoid assigning responsibility.**

Nobody enjoys feeling guilty. If anything, placing blame on someone will make them feel defensive, which is not a good mental state in which to approach solving difficulties. Rather, make sure that everyone involved in the dispute has a free exchange of concerns. Identify the most severe pain points based on all that has been said. Change the topic to them and how everyone in attendance can help to solve them.

**Be illuminating rather than critical.**

Imagine hearing, "You did this badly," from someone. It wouldn't feel good to do that. What if, though, that person had stated, "I don't have what I need"? Then, instead of taking the other person's side, you could be tempted to inquire about their requirements. You can solve issues much more quickly from there.



You'll notice that the better problem-solving sentence starts with "I." The conflict that is described by how each party feels rather than by blaming another is considerably healthier. The majority of people are sympathetic and will work to make other team members' bad feelings go away. In other words, they'll find a solution to the issue.

**Be patient and continue.**

You might want to rip your hair out if there are major conflicts. You might feel like screaming at them. You are aware that you should avoid both the former and the latter. When everyone is calm, even the most severe arguments can be settled.

Consider framing your issues in a neutral manner as opposed to approaching a conflict with impatience. You can always say, "I'm sick of this client treating me like this." "When this client abuses me in this manner, I feel... Take note of how much less dramatic the second phrase sounds. Someone is much less likely to feel too stressed to dig in and start working on the solution with that calmer approach.

**Keep everything in the conflict.**

You run the danger of involving someone who isn't involved in the conflict when you talk about it with them. Occasionally, doing so is unavoidable: If two of your team members can't agree on something, they might seek your assistance. That's both natural and advantageous. However, there is an issue if one of those team members complains to another team member about the other. That third party is now directly involved in the fight.

Remind the members of your team to respect what is discussed in the meeting. And if someone involved in the argument is truly angry, advise them to let it out somewhere where no one else can see or hear them. That can entail keeping a journal or talking to a buddy who is not connected to the other parties at work. Better dispute resolution may result from venting your rage now.

**Ensure that everyone is aware not to take anything personally.**

Perhaps receiving criticism at your first job seemed like the end of the world. However, that is only worry talking; criticism is rarely presented with a personal motive. Make sure everyone understands not to take things personally when it comes time to handle issues.

Having said that, there is definitely something to be taken personally if the cause of the argument is insults or insulting remarks. However, if the problem only affects your job, you can handle it without hurting anyone. Just teach everyone to separate their emotions from the job at hand and to look at things logically to determine what went wrong and why.

**Watch your body language.**

Do you know how folks will occasionally claim to be "fine" while blatantly demonstrating that they aren't? That is the influence of nonverbal cues. It may be the situation when team members who are engaged in a dispute claim to be content with a resolution yet nevertheless show signs of unhappiness.

Although you can't confront someone for acting as though they don't mean what they say, you can encourage more open dialogue. You can remark, "I'm pleased to hear that," if someone claims to be fine with something but doesn't seem to be. Is there anything more you would like to say? By doing this, you can obtain more information that can be used by all parties to approach a workable solution.

**Keep your relationships intact.**

Relationships matter and a disagreement is rarely serious enough to justify tearing one of them apart. Make every effort to promote regrets and a spirit of reconciliation rather than trying to establish who is right or wrong. Additionally, you ought to encourage concentrating on the current conflict rather than previous ones that can arouse ire if they are suddenly brought up. Relationships are preserved via calm dialogues, which is the whole objective of conflict resolution.

**6. CONCLUSION:**

Professionals should strive to resolve conflict effectively rather than trying to avoid it at work. Strong conflict-resolution abilities enable employees to manage problems at work. People who handle disputes in a polite, upbeat manner open up opportunities for learning and growth within an organization. Clear, compassionate, and patient communication produces positive results and maintains long-lasting business partnerships.



### Tips to Improve Conflict Resolution Skills

Every nurse needs to be able to resolve conflicts. While workplace conflict may be inevitable, it may still be reduced and dealt with. It's crucial to learn how to settle disputes quickly and amicably without adding to your stress. Disputes of all kinds, including interpersonal, intrapersonal, and interdepartmental conflicts, can arise for nurses. Any quarrel can obstruct harmony and productivity. Conflicts can also harm one's self-esteem and productivity. Conflicts can occasionally be beneficial for change in the workplace, thus not all conflicts are negative.

- **Develop your communication and active listening skills.**

Practice not interrupting while you're listening to the other person. Make sure you comprehend everything the other person is saying. Communication gives people a chance to express their ideas, difficulties, and the causes of their conflicts. Because it allows for an interactive exchange of information, face-to-face communication is more effective than other modalities. Additionally, it gives you the opportunity to pay attention to important nonverbal cues made by the other person. It's crucial to employ open-ended inquiries to ensure that each party comprehends the thoughts and feelings of the other. This encourages people to investigate the issue further and identify the source of the disagreement.

- **Remain composed and acknowledge the conflict.**

Conflict resolution requires you to be composed and conscious of your emotions. Successful problem-solving depends on recognizing the validity of competing needs and examining them in a setting of empathy and compassion. To examine the issue and plan your strategy, including what you want to say, use critical thinking skills. Then, put your plan in writing and practice. If required, write out your essential talking points on a note card.

- **Keep a good outlook and work on controlling your emotions.**

You can fix the first half of the problem by having an optimistic outlook. Most decisions are influenced more by emotions than they are by logic, therefore being aware of and understanding your feelings will help you manage them. Anyone can get furious; that is simple; but being angry at the right person, in the right amount, at the right time, for the right reason, and in the right way is harder and not always within everyone's control. — Aristotle.

- **Make the connection your top priority.**

Instead of trying to "win" a dispute, your top objective should always be to keep the connection strong. Be considerate of the other person's opinion and of him or her.

- **Be present-minded.**

Your capacity to comprehend the realities of the current circumstance will be hampered if you are still carrying around unresolved wounds and resentments. Instead of dwelling on the past and placing blame, concentrate on what you can do right now to address the issue.

- **Be prepared to pardon.**

If you can't or won't forgive, it's impossible to resolve a problem. The key to finding a resolution is to let go of the need to punish, which never makes up for our losses and only makes matters worse by further sapping and emptying our life.

- **Understanding when to let things go.**

If you can't come to an agreement, decide to disagree. Only when two people are involved in a discussion can it continue. If a fight is futile, you can choose to quit taking part in it and continue.

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