



## SIX STEPS TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

**STEP 1: IDENTIFY AND DEFINE THE CONFLICT**

This is the critical point...what is really the problem? Can you identify the problem without blaming the other person or group? Think in terms of "I want...I need...I feel..." rather than, "You did this," or "You didn't do that." Be aware of your feelings and the feelings of others. Feelings are not a sign of weakness; rather, a sign of security. Feelings strongly influence our behavior. Feelings need ventilation.

**STEP 2: BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS**

Put some creative energy into thinking of ten or twelve possible solutions. Do no evaluation as it lessens creativity. If both conflicting parties are brainstorming together, try not to judge or belittle the ideas of the other person or group.

**STEP 3: EVALUATE THE SOLUTIONS**

Look at the consequences of each choice. Is it probable that the problem would be better or worse with that solution? Work together to find a solution acceptable to both parties. This often involves some compromising. Find a way both parties can "win" some of what they want.

**STEP 4: CHOOSE A SOLUTION**

Usually Step 3 will clarify a beginning solution. Remember it is not written in stone, but is something both parties are committed to trying. Both parties need to find a solution to the problem. Both need to agree on the chosen solution.

**STEP 5: IMPLEMENT THE SOLUTION**

Who will do what; when will they do it, and for how long? You can also build in agreed-upon consequences if either party breaks the agreement. It is often best to informally write out the agreement and sign it to avoid any confusion about the agreement.

**STEP 6: FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION**

This is as important as Step 1. Make sure the chosen solution has really solved the conflict to your mutual satisfaction. Conflict unresolved will not go away. It will still be there the next time you try to interact with the other person or group. Ask if the situation is better, worse, or the same. If it is better, do both parties want to extend the contract? If worse, go back to Step 2 and choose another solution. Conflict rarely stays the same.



## Six Steps to Conflict Management Worksheet

Think of a conflict you have had recently. Solve the conflict using the six steps.

### Step 1: What is the conflict?

### Step 2: Brainstorm solutions.

1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	

### Step 3: Evaluate the solutions.

Put a + or - for each person involved next to the brainstormed solutions.  
Does it solve the problem? Does it build the relationship?

### Step 4: Choose a solution.

### Step 5: Do it!

### Step 6: Evaluate the results.

Is the chosen solution working?  
If your solution isn't working, choose another solution from your brainstorming list.