

CONFLICT RESOLUTION TIPS

from the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center

1) Stay curious

Sometimes in conflict we make assumptions or decisions based only on our own understanding of the situation. Ask yourself: What am I assuming? What do I not know? What might be important to the other person? You might be surprised by the answers.

2) Recognize your triggers

...and respect those of others. Be aware of what your own triggers are, as well as the triggers of those around you. The more awareness you have of yourself, the better able you are to make productive choices.

3) Understand your own physical responses

Remember that our bodies can respond very quickly when triggered. Our bodies physically react to strong emotion, making it hard to think clearly and giving us clues about how we're feeling in a conversation and what to do next.

4) Step away if you need to

Recognize when you are escalated in a conversation and when you need to step away. It is okay to put the conversation on pause and let the other person know you need to take a break.

5) Be intentional

...in your communication. Think about what you want to achieve and what will get you there. Reminding yourself (and others) that you want a positive outcome and that you don't want to fight will help shape your communication.

6) Speak from your own experience

Since you can only control yourself, try not to use blaming or criticizing language. Focusing on specific behavior and not the other person in general can keep the topic more manageable.

7) Think about where and when

Be thoughtful when choosing the "where and when" to discuss a conflict. Neutral, safe locations and low-pressure moments can help the conversation stay productive.

8) Actively listen

...to the other person. Studies say most of us only remember 25-50% of what we hear. Staying fully present in a conversation can be a challenge, but active listening helps enormously to increase understanding and good will between people.

9) Get creative

Think about your needs and the other person's needs. Make a solution that honors what's important to each of you.

10) Call the WDRC: (360) 676-0122

The WDRC is your local resource for conflict resolution training and processes. Thousands of people each year talk to us about our workshops, mediation services, and more. Never hesitate to give us a call!

