

As a leader, you may need to step in and address conflicts that arise among group members. Below are some strategies that can help you effectively navigate these situations.

## **Conflict Resolution Strategies**

Each of the five conflict resolution strategies is different in their problem-solving approach. Choose the one that best fits your situation.

- **Problem-Solving:** You encourage all sides to work together creatively to achieve all goals. This is the highest level of conflict resolution.
- **Empowerment:** You delegate the responsibility of resolving the issue to the individuals involved, encouraging them to take ownership of the situation. This strategy works well for minor conflicts and fosters independent problem-solving.
- **Compromise:** You encourage each side to give up a little to reach a common solution.
- **Dictating:** You listen to both sides, then make a decision and enforce it.
- **Collaboration:** You work to ensure that all perspectives are acknowledged and integrated into the final outcome. This approach seeks to meet the needs of all parties without sacrificing your own expectations, and is especially effective for maintaining long-term relationships and team cohesion.

## **Getting groups to resolve their own conflicts:**

It's always better when the people involved in a conflict resolve it with a minimum of outside intervention. Here's how a mediator can nudge the process along:

- Intervene only when asked
- Allow plenty of time for discussion
- Listen actively to both sides
- Take a win-win approach
- Restate common goals – repeatedly
- Ask for suggested resolutions from the participants

- Redirect the focus to the issues, not personalities
- Point out misunderstandings
- Remain neutral, don't let your emotions get in the way
- If you cannot remain neutral, bring in a mediator

## **If you're a participant in the conflict:**

- Give up graciously if the evidence shows you're wrong. The ability to say "I was wrong" sends a powerful message that can improve future conflict-resolution efforts.
- Even when you're "right" it's helpful to admit blame in some of the circumstances that led to the conflict.
- Avoid getting angry. Count to 10, take a cooling-off break, whatever it takes. If emotions are high, consider bringing in a neutral third party

## **Try to Negotiate**

**Definition of Negotiation:** to attempt to come to an agreement on something through discussion and compromise

## **People Who Won't Negotiate**

Some people refuse to be a part of the solution because they want to protect their special interests or privileges. Here are a few steps to take in dealing with such people.

- Start to negotiate anyway.
- Explain why it is in their interest to negotiate, why it is worthwhile to deal with the problems existing between the both of you.
- Find a higher value that you both agree on, for example, you both want to project a positive image.
- Be trustworthy. Do what you said you would do. Lead by example.