



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

As a supervisor, you sometimes need to monitor workplace conflict, assist the individuals involved with managing the conflict, and provide the leadership that enables your team to productively work together. As much as possible, work with employees individually and encourage them to address the conflict directly with each other. When meeting with an employee about workplace conflict, follow the “**Step by Step**” process of conflict management.

1. **Allow the employee to speak first:** “I’d like to hear your side of the story.” Listen carefully and ask questions to clarify any confusion.
2. **Supervisor’s turn:** “I’d like to discuss my perceptions.” Focus on: the issue, present and future, and on solutions. Inform them that the situation must change and identify consequences if it does not.
3. **Mutual planning:** Ask the employee what they can do to resolve the situation. Offer ideas indirectly by suggestion. Prepare an action plan for resolution (see reverse of this page). This can involve referring the employee(s) to the EAP.
4. **Follow-up:** Thank the employee for their commitment. Review action plan. Schedule a follow-up meeting to evaluate progress.



THE NEXT STEP

Sometimes, despite individual interventions with employees in conflict, the situation continues or worsens. The “**Next Step**” involves meeting with both employees for a problem solving session. Another advocate may be invited if the parties involved agree. Here are the steps:

1. Set up a private meeting with both employees and address the conflict directly.
2. Set guidelines for the session in terms of purpose, time, and behavior.
3. Encourage direct communication between employees. They are to address one another with you as the neutral observer.
4. Establish performance expectations and consequences if expectations are not met.
5. Contract with both employees (see reverse of this page) as to what they will do to improve the situation. Make sure both receive a copy of the contract.
6. Thank them for their participation and schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss progress.



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FORM

Both parties in the conflict agree that the goal is to fix the problem – not to assign blame, hurt, humiliate, or threaten.

Employee # 1 – Explain what the problem is, express his/her feelings and state what changes they would like to see.

Employee # 2 – Explain what the problem is, express his/her feelings and state what changes they would like to see.

Establish an agreement with both employees as to the steps to be taken to resolve this issue. Both parties agree that whatever happens in the conflict session will remain confidential. Performance expectations, organizational policy regarding code of conduct and harassment and consequences if these are not met.

Employee Signature _____ Date _____

Employee Signature _____ Date _____

Supervisor Signature _____ Date _____