

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



Creative Approaches to Discussions

PAVRO

LEADING VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

May 3rd 2018

Lori Robinson

Learning Objectives

- Discuss reasons for conflict in the workplace
- Gain an understanding of what a respectful workplace is and isn't
- Creative approaches to confidently managing team conflict
- Preparation for 'the discussion'
- Focus on problem solving
- Review of practical tools
- Leader responsibility and accountability
- Next steps

Conflict @ Work or at home

It is much easier to
ignore conflict and
play ostrich.



Why learn about conflict management?

- Many feel threatened by conflict resolution because they may not get what they want if the other party gets what they want
- People can get hurt in conflict resolution, but they are still expected to work together
- Volunteers don't always feel that their organization will support or appreciate their efforts

Sources of Team Conflict

- Differing work styles
- Lack of communication
- Lack of access to information
- Lack of resources
- Competing deadlines
- Personality clashes
- 'Under-use' of common sense



What a Respectful Policy Says

Our Organization or Board will neither tolerate nor condone behavior that is likely to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of an individual, or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment in the organization or board or at any organization - related event.

Stages of resolution framework

Stage 1: seek to understand different points of view in an informal conversation

Stage 2: involve a third party with recognized authority who may assist in reaching a mutually acceptable decision

Stage 3: if no resolution is successful, you may have to seek involvement with senior staff or board member or mediator

“A compassionate soul will travel great distances and scale high walls in order to understand another point of view.”

Anonymous



Win-Lose vs. Win-Win

Win-Lose (fixed position)

- Me vs. you
- Us vs. them
- Competition / mistrust

Decision by

- Compromise
- Pressure
- Coercion
- Manipulation

Win-Win (interest based)

- Us vs. the problem
- Collaboration & openness

Decision based upon

- Exploration
- Fairness
- Mutual interests
- Agreement

7 Steps to Deal with Conflict

1. State how you see the situation and your feelings
2. Focus on the issue not the person
3. Explain how the problem affects them, you and others or performance (remember common interests)
4. Reassure desire to resolve issue
5. Ask for the other person's point of view & listen to their viewpoint
6. Ask for a solution. Explore and discuss possible solutions. (Come up with a common interest solution)
7. Get a commitment and give a commitment (be specific)

4 “F” words to use during conflict

- Fight

- Face

- Friend

- Forget

Hard on Issues, Soft on People



- Focus on the issue not the person
- Focus on common interests
- Appeal to shared common interests when you have a conflict
- Use the shared common interests to find a solution
- Be solution-focused



Benefits of Conflict Resolution

- Causes people to listen to differing viewpoints and consider new ideas
- Enables people to increase their alternatives and potential paths
- Results in increased participation and more ownership of and commitment to the decisions and goals of the group or person

Tips to Encourage Meaningful Work Conflict

- Create a cultural norm where conflict around ideas is tolerated – personal attacks are not
- Continued training in healthy conflict and problem solving skills
- Be aware of signs that a conflict about a solution is getting out of hand and act accordingly

Rules of the Road

- Create an environment in which healthy conflict is encouraged by setting clear expectations
- Reward, recognize and thank people who are willing to take a stand and support their position
- If you experience little dissension in your group, examine your own actions

Preparing for that difficult conversation

- Prepare!
- Write a script out
- Practice
- Go into the conversation with a positive attitude
- Use ORID questions/ statements
 - Objective
 - Reflective
 - Interpretive
 - Decisional

The Focused Conversation

Objective

- ✓ What are the actual facts?
- ✓ What did you observe?

Reflective

- ✓ How do you feel?
- ✓ What are your preferences?

Interpretive

- ✓ What is the meaning?
- ✓ What can we learn?

Decisional

- ✓ What actions will you take?
- ✓ What experiment can you run?



“A great attitude does much more than turn on the lights in our worlds; it seems to magically connect us to all sorts of serendipitous opportunities that were somehow absent before we changed.” ~

Earl Nightingale

Communications

- Listen
 - Gather information
 - Do not interrupt
 - Attend to what is being said
 - Attend to non-verbal messages
- Suspend evaluative comments
- Don't attempt to reason
- Do not correct errors of fact
- Hold off contradictory opinions

During the discussion

- Ask what they want
- Ask clarifying questions
- Paraphrase their problem - concur with assessment
- Ask if that is everything
- If not – keep asking questions until it is all
- Accept influence when it is warranted
- Use a respectful voice
- Watch your own body language

Helping you have healthier relationships

- Acknowledge your mistakes
- Apologize promptly and properly
- Forgive and let go
- Adjust your own expectations
- Drop the blame game
- Don't judge others by your own standards
- Listen actively
- Give credit where credit is due

Summary

- Give and receive respect
- Be willing to listen
- Understand your role as leader
- Step in when you witness disrespectful conduct
- Model the kind of behavior you want to see – lead by example
- Exercise personal courage and accountability

- “A professional is someone who does his best work when he doesn’t feel like it.”

~ **Allistair Cooke**



Conclusion – basics sand box play

- > Share everything.
- > Play fair.
- > Don't hit people.
- > Put things back where you found them.
- > Clean up your own mess.
- > Don't take things that aren't yours.
- > Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
- > Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.
- > When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.



DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

PAVRO

LEADING VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



Thank you

Lori Robinson

Special thank you to Kathleen Douglass- Douglass Leadership Group