

# Recognizing and Addressing Conflict

Connect, Learn, and Grow Series

## Conflict defined:

A disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns

- Parties perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns
- Perceive finite resources, limited options, and limited solutions
- People respond to the perceived threats, rather than to an “objective” reality

## Underlying Needs

Acceptance	Compassion	Follow-through	Learning	Reflection
Adaptability	Competence	Freedom	Love	Relaxation
Appreciation	Consciousness	Fun	Mattering	Reliability
Autonomy	Connection	Growth	Meaning	Relief
Awareness	Consideration	Harmony	Mourning	Respect
Balance	Contribution	Healing	Movement	Rest
Beauty	Cooperation	Health	Mutuality	Safety
Belonging	Creating	Honesty	Nurturance	Security
Caring	Creativity	Hope	Openness	Self-expression
Celebration	Dependability	Humor	Order	Self-reliance
Challenge	Dignity	Inclusion	Participation	Space
Choice	Ease	Independence	Partnership	Spontaneity
Clarity	Effectiveness	Inspiration	Peace	Stability
Collaboration	Efficiency	Integration	Play	Support
Communication	Empathy	Integrity	Presence	Trust
Community	Equality	Intimacy	Progress	Understanding
Companionship	Fairness	Joy	Purpose	Wellbeing

## Exercise 1

Recall a time you were involved in a conflict that you would consider meaningful. Use that experience to answer the following questions.

- What were your needs in that situation?
- What were the other person’s needs?

- How well did you feel those needs (yours and the other person's) were addressed?
- How did you feel at the time?
- What is your understanding of how the other person felt?

## Strategies and Modes to Address Conflict

### Exercise 2

Think about different conflicts in your life. What strategies were effective and were not effective in addressing the conflict?

Effective	Not Effective

**Active listening:** the process of seeking to understand another person's point of view, demonstrating a desire to understand the meaning of that person's communication without judgment. These can be verbal and non-verbal. Restate, clarify, ask questions, summarize, encourage, body language, tone, eye contact, and remove distractions

Restate	"It sounds like you weren't expecting that to happen."
Clarify	"Can you say more about that?"
Ask questions	"How did that make you feel?"
Summarize	"What I understand is ....."
Encourage	"I want to know what has upset you."
Reflect	"I can imagine how upsetting that must have been."
Validate	"I am glad we are trying to figure this out."

**Assertive Communication:** the sharing of one’s needs and concerns while respecting the needs of other persons involved – clarify needs, identify specific desired outcomes

“I noticed there are some errors in the report. I need to make sure there aren’t any errors. Let’s look it over together to make updates and then discuss how to avoid this in the future.”

### Modes of Communication

	Pros	Cons
In-Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Real time conversation</li><li>- Read visual cues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Less time to process</li><li>- Sometimes not an option</li></ul>
Virtual Meeting with Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Real time conversation</li><li>- Read visual cues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Delay or tech issues</li></ul>
Phone call or virtual meeting without video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Real time conversation</li><li>- Might feel less intimidating</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No visual cues</li></ul>
Chat message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Offers time to process</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Words can be misinterpreted</li></ul>
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Offers time to process</li><li>- Provides written documentation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Words can be misinterpreted</li></ul>

### Exercise 3

Think of a conflict you have going on now (personal or professional).

1. Which mode of addressing the conflict is most appropriate?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Write out what you would actually say or send to the other person about the conflict.

### Additional Resources

Fully Prepared to Lead: Modes of Conflict Management: <https://hr.wisc.edu/professional-development/programs/virtual-learning/>

Employee Assistance Office: <https://hr.wisc.edu/employee-assistance-office/>

LifeMatters: <https://hr.wisc.edu/employee-assistance-office/lifematters/>

OMBUDS: <https://ombuds.wisc.edu/>