



CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

Department of Human Resources

Self-Guided Conflict Resolution Guidelines

When conflict arises, this exercise can help you walk through the situation and determine next steps. Each party should run through the questions below individually and prepare their answers for a discussion. Discussions should be in person and should not be part of a broader check-in meeting, project update meeting, etc. This exercise is best when utilized for job-related, task based conflicts between two or more people.

In your own time, reflect on the following questions individually:

1. **Describe the situation:** how did the current circumstances come to be and what is the state of things now?
2. **Describe the task:** what is it that needs to be accomplished or what is the required action?
3. **Who has the expertise?** who has the expertise regarding the task or ask at hand?
4. **Who has the authority?** who has the decision making responsibility for the task and it's outcomes?
5. **Whose job description would this task normally fall under?** This assessment should focus on **the task**. All members of the team may have shared responsibilities but determine who would normally carry out the task on a regular basis.
6. **How would you like to proceed?** this should be your assessment as an individual and a topic of discussion among all parties once reflections are completed.
7. **Schedule a time to discuss the above questions** and the situation to come to an agreement as to how to proceed. It is important to discuss any discrepancies in the above questions, as well.

Tips for completing this process:

1. Make sure to stay as factual as possible. Conflict is easier to resolve when you look at the facts of the matter at hand.
2. While the facts are important, it is easier to focus on them once you take some time to tend to any emotions around the topic. Make sure you talk to a trusted friend or colleague or spend some time in quiet reflection before working through these questions to ensure a clear mind.
3. Make your answers as specific as possible.
4. When problems arise, a neutral third party can be helpful. Consider talking to a trusted friend or colleague throughout this process.
5. Your Human Resources Administrator (HRA) may be available to serve as a third party in meetings as necessary. Reach out to them directly for assistance.