

Conflict Resolution Framework

Conflict is a natural part of teamwork. Managed well, it can lead to innovation, trust, and stronger collaboration. This framework provides a structured approach to recognising, addressing, and resolving conflicts constructively.

1. Purpose of This Tool

- ☐ Promote open and respectful dialogue during disagreement.
- ☐ Provide a consistent process for resolving conflicts quickly and fairly.
- ☐ Strengthen team relationships through transparency and empathy.
- ☐ Reduce tension and maintain focus on shared goals.
- ☐ Encourage accountability and continuous learning from challenges.

Tip: The goal of conflict resolution is not to eliminate disagreement, but to turn it into productive discussion.

2. Understanding Conflict

Type of Conflict	Description	Example
Task Conflict	Disagreements about goals, priorities, or methods.	Different views on project approach.
Relationship Conflict	Personal friction or miscommunication between individuals.	Tension from tone, attitude, or past interactions.
Process Conflict	Disputes about roles, responsibilities, or workflows.	Confusion about decision-making authority.

- ☐ Identify which type of conflict is occurring before taking action.

Tip: Most conflicts are rooted in unclear communication, not personal intent.

3. Conflict Early Warning Signs

Indicator	Example	Impact
Reduced communication	Team members stop sharing updates.	Misalignment grows.
Emotional reactions	Frustration or sarcasm in meetings.	Trust deteriorates.
Repeated mistakes	Tasks are ignored or misunderstood.	Productivity falls.
Avoidance	People stop working directly together.	Collaboration weakens.

☐ Spot these signs early and address them before escalation.

Tip: Silence is often a sign of unresolved tension - don't ignore it.

4. Step-by-Step Resolution Process

Step	Action	Purpose
1. Acknowledge	Recognise the conflict and agree to discuss it.	Prevents avoidance and denial.
2. Understand	Let each person explain their perspective without interruption.	Builds empathy and clarity.
3. Identify Root Cause	Focus on facts, not assumptions or emotions.	Moves discussion to the real issue.
4. Explore Solutions	Brainstorm ways forward that meet both sides' needs.	Encourages collaboration and creativity.
5. Agree and Act	Confirm actions, responsibilities, and review timelines.	Restores accountability and progress.
6. Follow Up	Review outcomes and relationships after implementation.	Ensures long-term resolution and learning.

☐ Follow this structure during mediation or coaching discussions.

Tip: Stay objective - the aim is resolution, not assigning blame.

5. Communication Guidelines

Guideline	Description
Use “I” statements	Speak from personal experience, not accusation.
Listen actively	Reflect back what you’ve heard to confirm understanding.
Stay fact-focused	Avoid emotional or speculative language.
Manage tone and body language	Stay calm, neutral, and professional.
Focus on the future	Agree on what happens next, not who was right.

☐ Use these guidelines in all team conflict discussions.

Tip: Emotional control builds credibility and trust during conflict.

6. Mediation Support Framework

Step	Mediator Role	Notes
Preparation	Gather background information and clarify issues.	
Conversation Setup	Establish ground rules for respectful discussion.	
Dialogue Facilitation	Encourage balanced participation and listening.	
Solution Building	Help identify win-win outcomes and compromise.	
Closure	Summarise agreements and confirm next steps.	

☐ Use this framework if mediation by a neutral party is needed.

Tip: A mediator’s role is to guide dialogue, not make decisions.

7. Resolution Agreement Template

Issue	Agreed Action	Responsible Parties	Completion Date	Follow-Up Date	Status
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☐ Use this section to formalise agreements reached during discussions.

Tip: Written clarity prevents future misunderstandings.

8. Reflection Questions

Question

Reflection

What triggered the conflict?

How did we communicate during the process?

What could we have done differently to prevent escalation?

What positive outcome emerged from resolving it?

☐ Reflect individually and as a team to turn conflict into a learning opportunity.

Tip: Reflection helps transform short-term tension into long-term growth.

9. Preventative Strategies

Area	Preventative Practice	Owner	Review Frequency
Communication	Regular team check-ins and feedback sessions.		
Roles & Responsibilities	Clear documentation and alignment.		
Decision-Making	Defined process for resolving disagreements.		
Team Culture	Encourage open expression and diversity of thought.		

☐ Build prevention into team culture to reduce future conflicts.

Tip: Prevention is more effective than reaction - keep communication open.

Notes

10. Post-Resolution Review

Review Date Outcome Team Feedback Relationship Status

☐ Review how well the resolution has held over time.

Tip: Follow-up ensures that tensions don't quietly return later.

How to Use This Framework

Use this tool to manage conflicts quickly and constructively. Encourage teams to resolve issues early through open discussion, and use mediation only when necessary. Combine it with the Psychological Safety Checklist and Team Dynamics Assessment to create a healthy, transparent team culture.

Notes