

Healthy Conflict worksheet

When you recognise that you're in an Unhealthy Conflict it's useful to take the time to step back and think through productive mindsets and preparation to move you into a Healthy Conflict as quickly as possible.

We are going to use the PAUSE method to move this Unhealthy Conflict to a Healthy Conflict as it will give you the best chance of having a successful Healthy Conflict.

Prepare to change the Unhealthy Conflict into a Healthy Conflict

Acknowledge internally	Mindset	Preparation	Courage & composure
<p>Why is it in my own best interests for me to give this feedback?</p> <hr/> <p>Me and my project manager, George, aggressively disagree on the order in which we should do the tasks on this project.</p> <p>George thinks we should build the user interface elements first, I think we should build the hardware interfaces first.</p> <p>This is a conflict!</p>	<p>Why is it in the best interests of the other person/people to give this feedback?</p> <hr/> <p>George honestly believes his way is the best way to proceed! He is trying to protect the project timeline.</p> <p>Even though he is being aggressive (assertive?) he isn't "against me" he is just "against my idea" and that emotion is spilling over.</p>	<p>Why is it in the best interests of my team to give this feedback?</p> <hr/> <p>This isn't a time to talk about the various merits of the approaches - we are just handling the Unhealthy Conflict itself.</p> <p>I should have it in private with George, so we can not feel like we have to justify our positions and just talk to the conflict itself.</p>	<p>What will happen if I don't give this feedback?</p> <hr/> <p>In private, we are both less likely to want to prove our own points and can discuss the Unhealthy Conflict itself.</p> <p>I should take a few minutes before hand to think about this conflict and why it's important for us to resolve it.</p>

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Actively Listen to them discuss the Conflict

Acknowledge to them that there is a Conflict right now. Invite them to discuss it with you and to express why they think there is a Conflict and what it is about.

Then stop talking and listen carefully! Empathise with them & respect them.

Understand their point of view

Take a moment after they finish speaking in case they want to keep talking. Sometimes they will pause just to see if you are listening, so ask open questions to gather as much information as possible from them. It's also very important to assume positive intent in your questions.

Imagine they are acting with the best intentions, because they are!

Share your view of what happened, without blame

First, summarise their own points back to them. This shows that you have successfully done the previous step (Understand). If there are any misunderstandings of your own intent in their story, correct them carefully and with respect.

Then, give your own view of what happened - as blamelessly as possible. Where it differs from theirs, explain why carefully and with respect.

End with alignment and action

Re-affirm your common goals - what are you trying to achieve together? Gain agreement about what happened previously, if there are any misunderstandings here it will harm your success in the future.

Then, agree what should happen in the future - both with this Conflict and when a future Conflict arises.