

Conflict Resolution Options and Tips

Conflict Resolution Option/Style	Use This Option When ...	Be Aware That ...
<p>Cooperating: A win-win option where you work with the other party to identify a resolution that meets both your needs. This option is not initially about offering concessions, but instead is about working together to identify a mutually acceptable solution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ You need buy-in and commitment from both parties ◆ You need an effective ongoing relationship but also need to meet your own goals (balance between “winning” and maintaining the relationship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ It can take longer to reach an agreement through cooperation than with some other options ◆ This may not produce the exact conclusions that you want...it often involves some compromises
<p>Directing: This option involves direct debate and dialogue with the intention of trying to “win.” This is a competitive “I win - you lose” approach that seeks to ensure that your solution is adopted and that your needs are met, even at the expense of the other person’s needs. It may involve persuading the other party or simply convincing them to concede.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ You don’t need or want an ongoing relationship ◆ Getting your desired outcome and meeting your needs are essential ◆ You are dealing with principles that can’t be compromised (e.g., unethical behaviors) and you have tried other tactics unsuccessfully ◆ There is not time for other less confrontational options (e.g., emergencies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Confrontation can be emotional or even destructive in nature...it may escalate the conflict ◆ Future interactions can be very difficult ◆ If overused, may be a sign of an underlying sense of inadequacy ◆ It is unlikely to result in the other person’s “commitment”
<p>Accommodating: This is offering concessions or accepting the other party’s solutions so that their needs are met and they feel good about the result. This is an “I lose - you win” approach to conflict resolution where you subjugate your own needs to theirs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ You need to maintain a good relationship ◆ Your needs are not as important in this instance as the other party’s needs ◆ You need them committed to a solution and don’t feel that it has to be “your” solution ◆ You believe that short-term concessions will result in long-term benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ You may be giving up something that is critical to your success ◆ Overuse may be a sign of discomfort with conflict and of not valuing your own needs and goals
<p>Avoiding: In this option you chose to avoid dealing with the conflict by avoiding the person and/or not discussing any sensitive issues or areas of disagreement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ You or others need time to cool down ◆ Time alone will likely resolve the conflict ◆ You know you can’t “win” and could benefit from a delay ◆ You don’t think the conflict is worth the effort needed to resolve it (i.e., the conflict has little or no impact) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Not addressing the problem can allow it to escalate and become harder to resolve ◆ Denying the problem exists may indicate a lack of responsibility ◆ Overuse may be a sign of discomfort with conflict
<p>Compromising: Finding a middle ground between what you want and what the other party wants. Both parties make concessions. Each party gets some, but not all, of what they want.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ No solution is likely that will allow both parties to be fully satisfied ◆ There isn’t time to work out a full win-win solution ◆ A temporary stop-gap solution is needed in order to buy time to develop a win-win solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ This requires sacrificing some of what you need/want ◆ Neither party may be completely happy with the solution ◆ Conflict could re-emerge after people “live” with the compromise for a while