

What is conflict resolution?

. Conflict resolution is a process that helps people resolve their disputes (without ultimately resorting to violence). In any dispute, ideas tend to crystallize into positions that narrow the disagreement into two opposing choices. Helping disputants understand each other's interest moves them away from polarized positions. Conflict resolution aims to provide a forum for decisionmaking and find solutions acceptable to all parties. Conflict can arise in many areas of our lives: from family arguments, to village land disputes, to debates over politics and agriculture. The enormous range of areas with potential for misunderstanding makes conflict resolution a vitally important skill.



How do you resolve conflict?

Conflict can arise due to misunderstandings, ignorance of another's perspectives and/or deeply held ideologies. Resolution begins when different groups begin to understand each other's perspective and/or find common ground and empathy, sometimes outside the main issue. Conflict stemming from prejudice, biases, past events, and different values can begin to be resolved through positive dialogue.

Five steps to conflict resolution

The meeting(s) or discussion(s) will often take place away from the home sites of the parties involved.

1) The independent chair establishes guidelines such as the following for constructive communication.

- a) Comments should be brief – the chair can ask a speaker to stop in the interest of time.
- b) Comments should be based on the content of the discussions, and not be personal.
- c) Ask participants to be positive about looking for resolution.
- d) Highlight that as well as looking for compromise, you are looking for areas where the parties may agree.
- e) Highlight that a sense of humor and some humility on helps and recognize that diversity of opinion is okay.

2) Clarify perspectives of each party.

- a) Define a specific amount of time for each party to present their perspective on the key issues. The chair must insist that each party keep to the time set.
- b) Do not allow interruptions.