

Conflict Resolution Strategies

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will identify how to resolve a conflict. Specifically, it will cover:

1. Conflict Resolution Strategies
2. Reflect
3. From Breakdown to Breakthrough
4. Reflect

1. Conflict Resolution Strategies

The strategies below can help you resolve a conflict to a successful resolution.

- Clarify: What is the problem?
- Hear other people: What is your side of the story?
- Find solutions: Is there any other way?
- Identify the appropriate solution: We are going to do this approach.
- Evaluate and assess the outcome: How did it go?

The table below shows the paradigm shift in resolving conflict. The adversarial section represents the win/lose scenario which is not the goal of conflict resolution. The goal to having a dialogue is a collaboration that bears a win/win situation. Please spend additional time analyzing the table because it simplifies the direction of having conflict resolution.

The shift is from the Adversarial on the left to the Collaborative on the right	
Adversarial	Collaborative
Positions	Interests
Win/Lose I win! You lose!	Win/Win Both our needs are satisfied
This or That We both can't be satisfied	This and That Both our interests can be met
Right/Wrong	Different

My way is right and yours is wrong	We each have different perceptions of this issue
Defensive/Aggressive I am not safe and must defend myself or attack you	Empathic/Assertive I understand what you want I also have needs
Judgement/Blaming You caused this mess and must be punished	Curiosity/Compassion What are you feeling I am prepared to listen
You vs. Me We are enemies	You and I vs. The Problem We have a common problem that needs to be solved
Dividing the (Limited) Pie I must get as much as possible or I won't have enough	Expanding the Pie Finding new opportunities and possibilities
Power Over Domination: I must prove I am stronger than you are	Empowerment I get stronger by making you stronger
This chart was used with permission from Morrie Sacks, Collaborative Divorce Lawyer, Vancouver BC., http://www.collaborativedivorce.ca/	

2. Reflect

Consider the following scenario:

By virtue of your position, you are tasked with giving a direct report feedback on consistent poor performance. This direct report was one of your best friends before your promotion and has remained one of your biggest advocates as you adjust to your new role. Now, this colleague's position is in jeopardy.



How do you approach her with feedback?

3. From Breakdown to Breakthrough

The use of the three Cs (characteristics, competence, and courage) find common ground to transform the breakdown concept of conflict into a breakthrough. Everyone must be aware of the misconception of finding common ground. To most of us, common ground means that there is a need for you to do it my way. This is not how the concept is defined for this module. Clearly, it is very difficult to find common ground when you are only focused on yourself.

So, what are the barriers to moving through conflict to find common ground?

- Insufficient tools
- Adversarial organizational culture
- Assumptions that are unchecked—we make assumptions of what is right and good for everyone that causes resentment
- Leaders' arrogance to control everything

Transforming conflict with a common ground approach starts with understanding that conflict is neither negative nor positive. Conflict transformation is accomplished by ending adversarial stands toward pursuing a common interest to creatively collaborate. The common ground is the central concept of this strategy. Conflict transformation includes the following behaviors:

- Ethics: Honesty is the behavior that exemplifies this element. It is about the courage to do what is right.
- Process: The goal of this element is to build understanding and relationship.
- Emotional Intelligence: Being aware of one's own perception, social awareness, and relationship management.
- Problem Solving: Work on finding the best solution by collaboration.
- Collaboration: The more that sits on the table, the more creative and diverse are the solutions that enhance finding common ground.
- Communication: If communication is the cause of the problem, communication can also be the solution.
 - Listen actively and respectfully
 - Be transparent
 - Present suggestions with credible sources
 - Give others the benefit of the doubt

Video Transcription

Lina is the newly-promoted manager of a nursing unit at a metropolitan hospital. Recently, though, she's received complaints regarding one of her best friends before the promotion, Noah, who remains one of her biggest advocates. Noah has been consistently performing poorly. And his position is in jeopardy. Lina now has to try and find the best way to approach him with feedback and resolve the conflict.

Conflict is something that we all encounter. In the workplace, it can trigger negative emotions, decrease productivity, and weaken team morale. Furthermore, resolving the conflict in favor of one side will often lead to resentment and future conflicts. So another approach is conflict transformation where a breakthrough is achieved by finding common ground. This relies on the use of the three Cs, which refer to characteristics, courage, and competence.

Characteristics refers to defining the issue based on objective facts without any bias. So in Lina's case, she needs to approach Noah with the objective facts concerning his behavior and limit the emotional factors like their friendship.

Courage is the strength to move beyond one's own belief in order to examine the situation from a neutral point of view. So Lina needs to move past her belief that she should always be on her friend's side and approach the matter impartially. Finally, competence is one's ability to implement the previous two Cs skillfully as well as other factors like interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving skills.

Transforming conflict with a common ground approach starts by understanding that conflicts are neither negative nor positive and that finding a common ground does not mean there is a need for you to do it my way. In fact, it's important to shift from an adversarial approach where the scenario is win-lose towards a collaborative one that's a win-win situation. Once all parties understand that this will benefit

them, everyone can work together to pursue a common interest.

Conflict transformation includes a specific set of behaviors. First, ethics and honesty are about the courage to do what's right. Then there's the process in order to build understanding and solid relationships. Emotional intelligence refers to being aware of one's own perceptions, social awareness, and relationship management. Problem solving or working on finding the best solution is also essential.

Next, there's collaboration since the more that sits on the table, the more creative and diverse are the solutions that enhance finding common ground. Finally, if communication is the cause of the problem, communication can also be the solution. So the key is to listen actively and respectfully. Always stay transparent. Present suggestions with credible sources. And give others the benefit of the doubt.

4. Reflect

A provider and a family member performed a medication reconciliation prior to a patient's discharge. Now that the patient is home, the family member discovered that a medication that was to be provided by the hospital is missing. The family member has called the hospital and is furious. The family member stated that the provider was incompetent, needs to be fired, and that the hospital is now responsible for bringing the medication to the patient's home. The family member is threatening to post on social media and to the hospital's website sharing the situation and reporting what they describe as unsafe behavior and incompetence.



Using the approach from breakdown to breakthrough, how would you manage this situation?

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Support

If you are struggling with a concept or terminology in the course, you may contact **NurseLeaderSupport@capella.edu** for assistance.

If you are having technical issues, please contact **learningcoach@sophia.org**.