

The Crisis Stage of Conflict

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

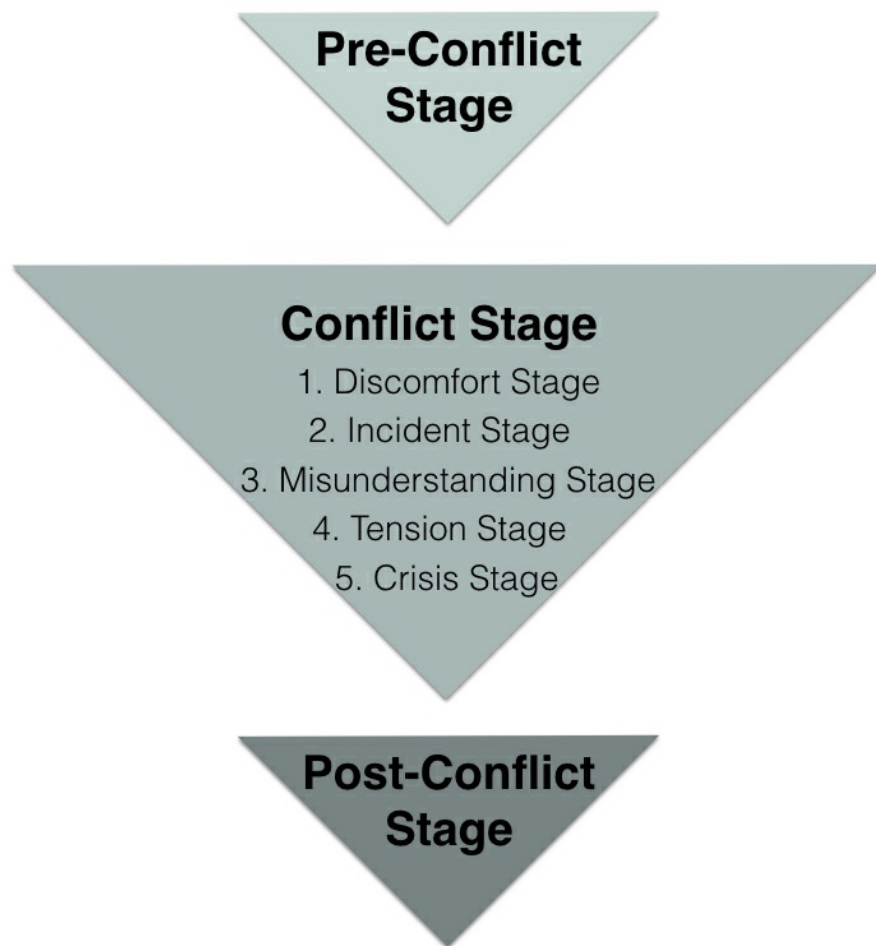
While there are a number of ways that conflict can be broken into stages, all models look at three large phases: pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict. This lesson will discuss the fifth stage within the conflict phase by focusing on:

1. The Crisis Stage

Remember that conflict has a series of stages and that the pre-conflict stage is when an issue may be brewing, but you're not really aware of what it is. Then, of course, there's the actual conflict stage, and the post-conflict stage when things are resolved.

Within the conflict phase, the first stage is often the feeling of discomfort that something is wrong. Following discomfort is the incident stage, where something either minor or major happens to bring the conflict out in the open. Next is the misunderstanding stage, which leads to tension. The more misunderstandings there are, the more tension there is. This tension can ultimately result in crisis.

The **crisis stage** of conflict is where things have really come to a head because the parties cannot communicate effectively. They may even act intentionally to harm each other, and they hold strong negative views of one another. This is, therefore, a pretty serious stage of conflict.



Read the scenarios below and imagine yourself in these situations. How would you likely respond or try to resolve the conflict?

Scenario 1

In your neighborhood, there have been some changes. A few neighbors have moved in who have large families that come over on the weekends. They also have teenagers who play loud music. This is starting to get on the nerves of other people in the neighborhood. The new families live close to you, and you've had a few conversations with them about the following issues:

- The music is loud.
- The parties tend to be messy.
- They don't clean up after these parties.

There's been tension when you've had these conversations, and now things are heating up. In particular, you feel as though the teenagers have been bringing in some kids from outside the neighborhood which makes the neighborhood feel less safe. You're not the only one in the neighborhood that's concerned, but you live closest to these neighbors.

When you woke up this morning, you discovered that someone sprayed graffiti on your garage. Now you know something has to change because this was a deliberate act to deface your property.

Scenario 2

You and your siblings have been discussing what to do with your dad. He's older and has been living in the family home. You and a couple of your siblings feel this is not safe anymore, and it's probably time that he moves into a care facility. He doesn't want to go, but you think the move is best. This afternoon, you went over to check on him as you usually do, and you found that he'd fallen while the stove was on. This is now a crisis; something has to change.



TERM TO KNOW

Crisis Stage

The stage of conflict in which parties cannot communicate effectively and act intentionally to harm each other, and view each other strongly negatively.

2. The Role of the Crisis Stage in the Conflict Resolution Process

Remember that conflicts can escalate and de-escalate between the stages depending on what is done to try to resolve the conflict during any one stage.

In general, it's good to resolve a conflict in the earliest stage possible. Crisis is the most difficult stage in which to resolve a conflict, but it can be done. Keep in mind, however, that it may require outside help to resolve a conflict if it has reached the crisis stage.

- You and some of your other neighbors decide to try and set up a community mediation. You're aware of a mediation program, and you think that might be the way to go. Bringing in a third party may allow you to talk to the new neighbors about these issues and restore some harmony within the neighborhood.
- After your father's fall, you call your siblings. You might say something like, "I'm going to call the doctor today. Let's all meet with the doctor and talk to him about what might be best." You are going to bring in a medical resource. You could also involve someone that the family trusts as a mediator to help you all have a conversation to resolve the conflict.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the **crisis stage** of conflict, and that although this is the most difficult stage during which to address a conflict, the **conflict resolution process** can still successfully take place here.

Source: This tutorial was authored by Sophia Learning. Please see our [Terms of Use](#).



TERMS TO KNOW

Crisis Stage

The stage of conflict in which parties cannot communicate effectively and act intentionally to harm each other, and view each other with a strongly negative perspective.