

# Methods of Conflict Resolution



Conflicts are generally caused when one person or group wants, needs or believes something quite different from another person or group. During the discussion about the issues, these differences are identified and the results can range from an amicable agreement to violence. A major influence on how the dispute is resolved is the attitude of both parties toward each other and towards conflict itself. Many people

believe that winning at all cost is what conflict resolution is all about. They operate with a win lose attitude and demonstrate the attitude through their behaviour.

Here are some tips on Conflict Resolution:

**Exploring Interests:** What do you really want, seeking common ground, respecting differences, clarifying assumptions and expectations?

**Win-Win Conflict Resolutions:** Based on the idea that most conflicts have several possible solutions. The best solution will meet the needs of both parties to the greatest possible degree. If both parties are operating with a win-win attitude, they want to maintain the relationship and find a way to solve the problem so they both come out winners. One major difficulty with conflict resolution is that strong emotions, expectations and assumptions often limit our ability to identify mutually acceptable alternatives.

- Encourage the other person to share his/her side of the conflict,
- Listen actively repeat back what was said and heard correctly.
- Ask the other person to now listen to your view of the conflict.
- Encourage the other person to share his/her needs and concerns
- Avoid judgmental statements and name calling.
- Generate ideas for a solution, wanting to meet both needs.
- Obtain the needed information or work to increase trust and energy

**Active Listening in Conflict Situations:** The skill of “active” listening is very important in diffusing the emotional arousal in conflict situations. Active listening means focusing on what the other person means through their words and body language.

Often people in conflict blame attack or engage in other aggressive or competitive behaviour. In such situations we want to respond in such a way that we communicate our reactions clearly and without attacking in response or becoming defensive. The goal is to depersonalize the issue, stop the unproductive behavior and get back on a track of working together to solve the problem.

Our EAP coordinators based here in Vancouver are here to help give us a call.

Brian Bethell,  
EAP Western Regional Coordinator

