

Understanding the Conflict

1. What is the issue? – Clearly define the conflict situation. Give it a name. Quite often the emotions appear to be the issue when in fact, they are symptoms of the problem.
2. What are the facts? – When involved in a conflict, especially one that becomes emotional, it's easy to get the facts confused with our thoughts. We decide what's true and it may not be so. It's extremely important to understand clearly what the facts are. When in doubt, be sure to check it out.
3. Just my thoughts – It's quite fine to have thoughts about something. When it's just a thought (rather than a fact) be sure you communicate it that way. It's very easy to get our thoughts confused with the facts. You might start out by saying statements like:
I think that . . .
It's my opinion that . . .
I'm thinking that . . .
4. How I feel – Our thoughts and the facts can cause us to have strong emotions. It's important to express them appropriately. These feelings are all about you. It's not a feeling if you say, I feel that if you would just . . . Again, remember to speak accurately. State them as in:
I feel sad
I feel frustrated
I'm angry
5. What I want – In any conflict, it's important to be clear about what you want for an outcome, not only for you but also for the other person(s) involved. It might be easier to express what you want for yourself rather than for the other person. When thinking about the WANT for the other person, it's about you wanting something that you believe they want. Then consider what you want for your relationship after the conflict. It might sound something like this:
I want to be listened to.
I want for you to have peace of mind.
And what I want for our relationship is to be respectful of one another.
6. Action steps – Finally, just thinking about an issue isn't enough. To resolve any conflict situation takes creating ideas and action steps to move closer to resolution. Brain storm new possibilities for moving forward and collaborate with the other person to find the best solution for all involved. There are always at least three new ideas so keep at it.

Understanding the Conflict – Worksheet

What is the issue?

What are the facts?

Just my thoughts

How I feel

What I want

Action steps
