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How to Manage Conflict

What is Conflict?

Conflict is a word that means a serious disagreement or argument.

When members of your group disagree, it can be hard to fix.

It can also have a bad effect on other group members or the group as a whole.

‘Managing conflict’ usually means **‘solving problems between people’**.

There are ways that you can manage conflict so that it doesn’t affect your group.

Both sides need to work together to find a solution to the problem.

They both need to agree on the solution.

The disagreement can be a good chance to solve other problems and to help people understand how to fix problems in future.



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Here are some tips to help you manage conflict.

- Don't wait until a little problem becomes a big one. Try and fix the problem early on.
- The longer you leave the problem, the more time and effort will be needed to fix it.
- Work together to find an answer to the problem. Make sure everyone's views are heard. Show respect for people's rights to have a say.
- Listen and understand why they hold the view. Try and understand exactly what their concerns and worries are. Look for the points that both sides agree on ('common ground').
- Manage emotions by trying not be angry or frustrated, and encourage others to do the same. Accusations and anger will not help the problem. Be clear in stating what you think and what you need to resolve the problem. Keep personalities out of it and don't let people make personal attacks.
- Start a discussion about what can be done to make it possible. Break up the problem into smaller parts.

The **agreement** needs to be clearly understood or the problem might happen again.



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Make sure the solution is clearly spelled out so that everyone can stick to it.

Make sure that everyone is responsible for making it work.

Think about checking back in later (reviewing the agreement) to make sure it is working.

If you manage conflict well and early, it can help group members think creatively about problem solving. It might also make your group stronger.

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