Basics of conflict resolution

What is conflict?

A conflict is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real).

Conflicts can be caused by differing expectations, personality clashes, competitiveness or differences in values.

Conflicts can trigger strong emotions.

Avoiding or mishandling conflict can result in long-term issues.

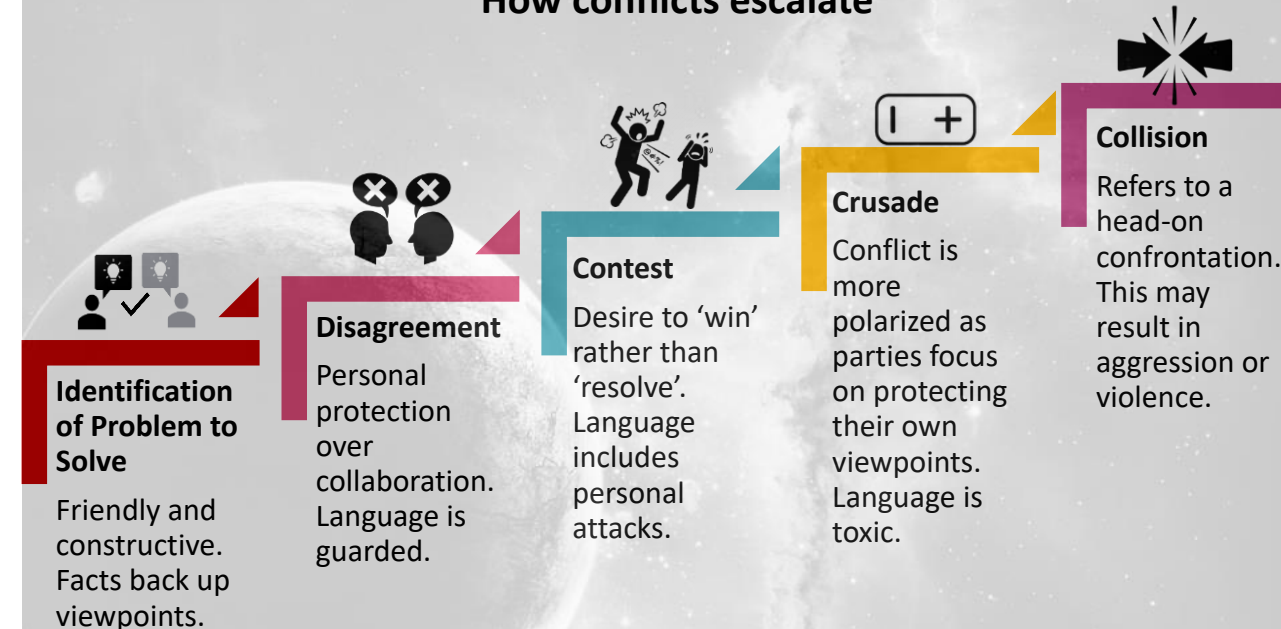Not all conflicts lead to negative outcomes.

Risk factors for violent behavior

Individual
- Victim of violence
- Substance use
- Unresolved anger
- History of aggression/ violent behavior

Interpersonal (relationships)
- Poor parenting and conflict in the home
- Friends that engage in violence

Community
- High level of unemployment
- Crime rate in neighbourhood
- Availability of weapons

Societal
- Social and economic Inequities
- Stigma and discrimination
- Policies
- Cultural norms that endorse violence

Types of conflicts

Structural Conflict
- Caused by forces external to the people in dispute. These include limited physical resources or authority, geographic constraints, time constraints, and organizational changes.

Relationship Conflict
- Results from personality clashes or negative interactions between two or more people.

Interest Conflict
- Arises when one or more of the parties believe that in order to satisfy his or her needs, the needs and interests of an opponent must be sacrificed.

Value Conflict
- Value conflicts are caused by perceived or actual differences in belief systems.

Data Conflict
- Occur when people lack information necessary to make wise decisions, are misinformed, disagree on which data is relevant, or interpret information differently.

How conflicts escalate

Identification of Problem to Solve
Friendly and constructive. Facts back up viewpoints.

Disagreement
Personal protection over collaboration. Language is guarded.

Contest
Desire to 'win' rather than 'resolve'. Language includes personal attacks.

Crusade
Conflict is more polarized as parties focus on protecting their own viewpoints. Language is toxic.

Collision
Refers to a head-on confrontation. This may result in aggression or violence.

Managing conflicts

Conflict Management Styles

Avoiding style:

- Withdraws from situation
- Tries to remain neutral and does not show true emotion
- Delays responding to conflict

Competing style:

- Based on power
- Aggressive and uncooperative
- Appropriate in short-term needs

Accommodating style

- Suppresses emotions and smooths over differences
- Agree to other point-of view
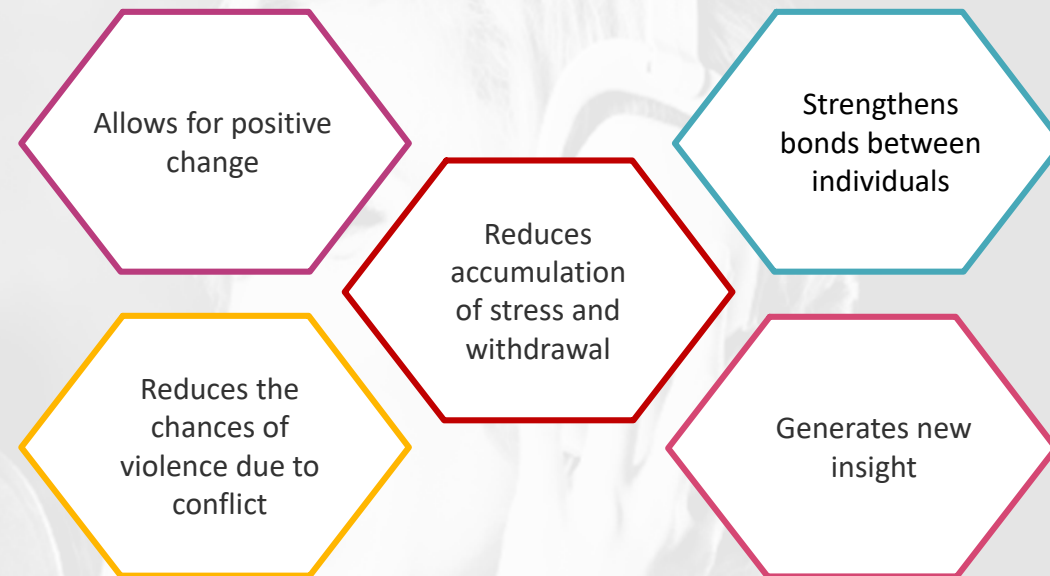- Want to keep the peace and maintain harmony

Compromising style

- Finds a middle ground
- Give and take by both parties
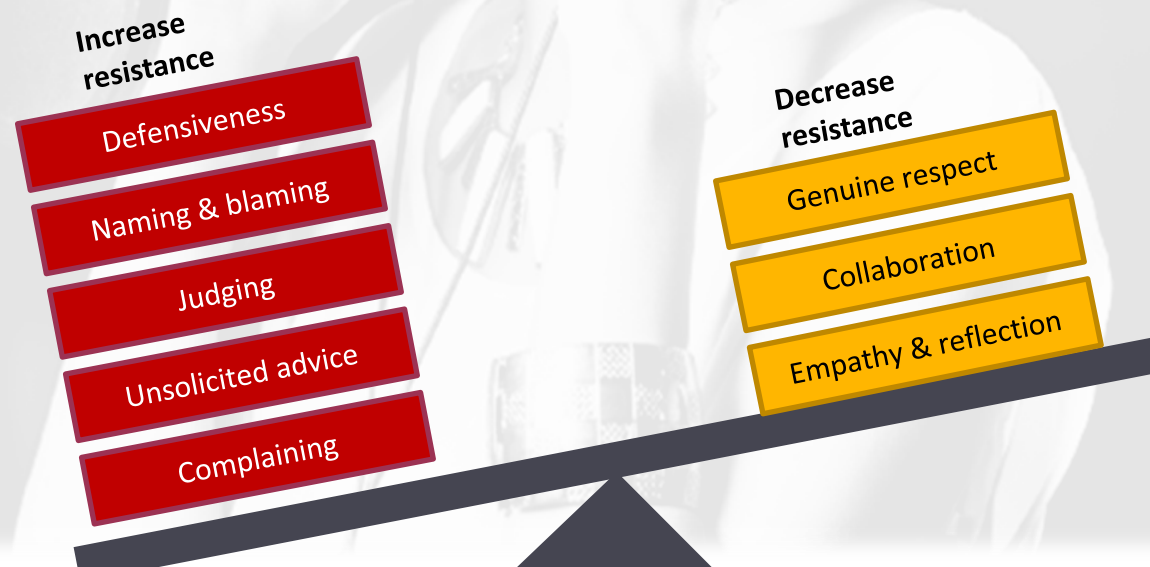- Seldom controls conflict

Collaborating style

- Assertive and cooperative
- Objectively evaluates differing views
- Often leads to creativity and new ideas
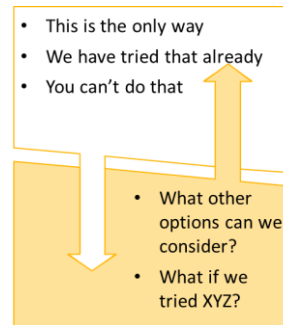
Benefits of effective conflict management

- Allows for positive change
- Strengthens bonds between individuals
- Reduces accumulation of stress and withdrawal
- Reduces the chances of violence due to conflict
- Generates new insight

Managing resistance

Increase resistance

- Defensiveness
- Naming & blaming
- Judging
- Unsolicited advice
- Complaining

Decrease resistance

- Genuine respect
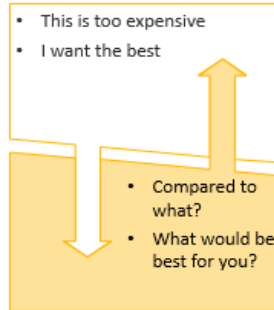- Collaboration
- Empathy & reflection

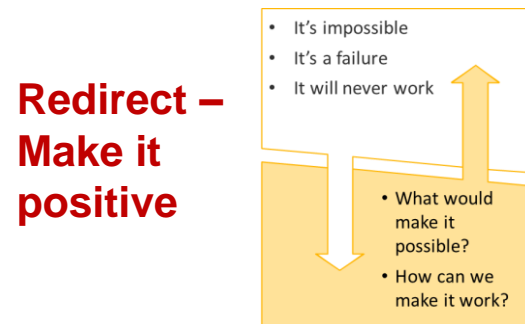# Conflict resolution techniques

The CALM Method

C — Conversations begin with 'I' statements

A — Ask question – allows you to understand the situation better.

L — Listen empathetically – allows you to see the other person's perspective

M — Mirror or repeat what the other person said. This often begins with a 'You' statement.

Use questions to bring about cooperation

Explore – Clarify details

- This is too expensive
- I want the best
- Compared to what?
- What would be best for you?

Find options

- This is the only way
- We have tried that already
- You can't do that
- What other options can we consider?
- What if we tried XYZ?

Redirect – Make it positive

- It's impossible
- It's a failure
- It will never work
- What would make it possible?
- How can we make it work?

Win-Win approach

- Going back to underlying needs
- Recognition of individual differences
- Attacking the problem, not the people
- Openness to adapting position in light of shared information

- Share the power
- Face and unpack the issue
- Withdraw, then revisit to resolve the issue
- Manage emotions
- Seek agreement which is fair to all involved

De-escalation

Dissolve the fights and prevent people from hurting one another.

Establish safe structures and use diplomacy.

Accommodate. Negotiate and get facts

Empower each other to resolve the problem.

Collaborate. Seek to win-win.