



LOVE ZIMBABWE CHARITY

CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

How to deal with conflict

Conflict between people is inevitable, as they have different personalities, opinions and ways of achieving objectives. Handling conflict efficiently is the key to preventing it from hindering people from working together to move forward.

Conflict resolution is only a five-step process:

Step 1: Identify the source of the conflict. The more information you have about the cause of the conflict, the more easily you can help resolve it. To get the information you need, use a series of questions to identify the cause, like, “When did you feel upset?” “Do you see a relationship between that and this incident?” “How did this incident begin?”

As a mediator, you need to give both parties the chance to share their side of the story. It will give you a better understanding of the situation, as well as demonstrate your impartiality. As you listen to each disputant, say, “I see” to acknowledge the information and encourage them to continue to open up to you.



Step 2: Look beyond the incident. Often, it is not the situation but the perspective on the situation that causes anger to fester and ultimately leads to a shouting match or other visible, and disruptive, evidence of conflict. The source of conflict might be a minor problem that occurred months before, but the level of stress has grown to the point where the parties have begun attacking each other personally instead of addressing the real problem. In the calm of your office, you can get them to look beyond the triggering incident to see the real cause. Once again, probing questions will help, such as “What do you think happened here?” or “When do you think the problem between you first arose?”

Step 3: Request solutions. After getting each party’s viewpoint on the conflict, the next step is to get each to identify how the situation could be changed. Again, question the parties to solicit their ideas: “How can you make things better between you?” As mediator, you have to be an active listener, aware of every verbal nuance, as well as a good reader of body language.

Just listen. You want to get the disputants to stop fighting and start co-operating, and that means steering the discussion away from finger pointing and toward ways of resolving the conflict.

Step 4. Identify solutions the disputants can support. You are listening for the most acceptable course of action. Point out the merits of various ideas, not only from each other’s perspective, but in terms of the benefits to the charity.



Step 5. Agreement. The mediator needs to get the parties to shake hands and agree to one of the alternatives identified in Step 4. Get the individuals to answer these questions: “What action plans will you both put in place to prevent conflicts from arising in the future?” and “What will you do if problems arise in the future?” If appropriate, write down details of the agreement reached and sign it.

The mediation process works between groups as well as individuals.

Key Points:- Conflicts can be incredibly destructive to good teamwork.

Managed in the wrong way, real and legitimate differences between people can quickly spiral out of control, resulting in situations where co-operation breaks down and the charity’s goals are threatened. This is particularly the case where the wrong approaches to conflict resolution are used.

To calm these situations down, it helps to take a positive approach to conflict resolution, where discussion is courteous and non-confrontational, and the focus is on issues rather than on individuals. If this is done, then, as long as people listen carefully and explore facts, issues and possible solutions properly, conflict can be resolved effectively.

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May 2018