

## STEPS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT

1. Before you begin, ask yourself 'what exactly is bothering me. What do I want the other person to do or not do. Am I overreacting?'
2. Remember the idea is not to 'win' but to come to a mutually satisfying and peaceful solution to the problem.
3. Set an appropriate time to have a discussion with the person with whom you have a conflict. Suddenly bringing up a problem and expecting the other person to be ready to discuss it is not a good idea.
4. State the problem clearly. At first, stick to the facts, then, once you have stated the facts, state your feelings. Use 'I' messages to describe feelings of anger and hurt, rather than saying things like 'you make me angry'.
5. Ask the other person to express his or her feelings and listen carefully. Do not interrupt. Try to understand their feelings
6. Try to see the problem through his or her eyes. Even if you cannot agree, you may be able to understand the problems from the other person's point of view.
7. Put forward some ideas to resolve the matter and invite the other person to do the same.
8. Discuss the pros and cons of each proposal.
9. Be ready to compromise. Respecting the other person's opinion can be a good starting point to resolve the issue.

**If you would like to talk  
to someone about  
peaceful conflict  
resolution, call  
The Crisis Centre on  
328.0922 or 322.4999**



**The Crisis Centre offers free  
counselling to men, women,  
teenagers and children who are  
experiencing any form of abuse or  
family violence.**



# PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION



**The Crisis Centre  
24-Hour Hotline 328-0922  
PO Box EE- 17910  
Nassau, Bahamas**  
[bahamascrisiscentre@yahoo.com](mailto:bahamascrisiscentre@yahoo.com)  
[www.bahamascrisiscentre.org](http://www.bahamascrisiscentre.org)

## How do you deal with conflict?

- Avoid conflict at all costs?
- Feel that any criticism or disagreement is an attack on you?
- Withdraw and become silent when you are angry?
- Feel 'out of control' when conflict arises?
- Feel you must fight back?

At one time or another, most of us have done one or more of these things. That's because in most relationships, conflict is inevitable and for most of us, this creates some discomfort. But conflict, if handled appropriately, can actually strengthen relationships and improve our understanding of each other. When handled badly, conflict can result in broken friendships, ended relationships, serious violent attacks and even death.

## What causes conflict?

Conflict can arise whenever people, whether close friends, family members, co-workers, partners or strangers disagree about their thoughts, feelings, ideas and values.

These differences can arise from seemingly unimportant matters to life threatening situations.

## Anger and conflict

Disagreements can lead to people feeling angry and hurt. People generally feel less in control when they are hurt and they may become angry as a way of feeling more powerful.

Feeling angry isn't necessarily a problem if the anger is handled constructively. Anger is a normal human emotion, just as normal and healthy as joy, happiness and sadness.

## Conflict styles

Because many people never learned to handle anger constructively, it is very common to handle it in inappropriate ways. Some people get angry easily and express it with little control. Others store up problems but do not express them openly. Sometimes the anger builds up inwardly and the person may act out the anger by harming themselves, such as drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders and suicidal thoughts

## How to deal with conflict

To deal with conflict appropriately, it is important to follow some basic rules.

## Rules for resolving conflict

**Remain calm:** try not to over react to difficult situations. By remaining calm, it is more likely that others will consider your point of view.

**Express feelings in words, not actions:** telling someone directly and honestly how you feel can be a very effective form of communication.

**Be specific about what is bothering you:** you should express clearly but calmly what is causing your anger.

**Deal with only one issue at a time:** don't bring up old issues until the present one has been discussed

**No 'hitting below the belt':** attacking areas of personal sensitivity creates an atmosphere of anger and distrust.

**Avoid accusations:** instead talk about how the other person's actions have made you feel.

**Avoid refusing to respond appropriately:** don't give the other person the silent treatment.

**Listen to what the other person has to say:** calmly!