Civil Service
Learning

Managing team conflict – top tips



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Top tips for managing conflict within your team. How do you manage it so that individuals continue to contribute productively to the team?

Use the tips below as a checklist to help you resolve negative conflict within your team but create and build constructive conflict where team members challenge each other in an open and honest debate.

1. Create a positive working environment

- Treat everyone in your team fairly and equally.
- Provide praise and recognition; be open and honest when providing motivational and developmental feedback.
- Encourage open and honest debate.
- Allow people to challenge each other in a positive way during team discussions.

2. Learn to spot the signs of conflict

- Body language is an early sign of negative conflict (e.g. crossed arms, leaning away from the person they're talking to).
- Facial expressions can suggest someone is not happy (e.g. frowning, gazing down or into the distance).
- Tone of voice may change.

3. Deal with conflict as soon as it occurs

- Take steps to work with the team to help them resolve the situation before it spirals out of control.

4. Set some ground rules for discussing conflict

- Bring individuals together to talk about the problem.
- Ensure the tone of the conversation is calm and non-threatening.
- Do not encourage discussions if one or more of the team members are still angry or emotional.

5. Remain neutral

- Remain objective and do not take sides.
- Find a solution that works well for everyone.

6. Seek advice and guidance

- Seek support before taking action by talking to your manager, a trusted colleague, or your HR department.

7. Develop your team's conflict management skills

- Review the learning resources available to support you.

8. Evaluate your conflict management skills

- Think about what you did well, as well as what you might do differently in the future.
- Make a note of your thoughts for future reference.
- Ask for feedback from the team members involved to find out how they felt you managed the situation.