

When people work together, conflict is an inevitable part of effective relationships. Conflict can provide an opportunity for employees to respectfully explore differences of opinion, expectations, personality, or style. Conflict often provides disputing parties an opportunity to develop multiple solutions that would not have been considered had a disagreement not occurred. However, unresolved conflict can result in deteriorating relationships and ultimately impact the overall effectiveness of individuals, teams, and work groups. First and foremost, a proactive response to conflict requires listening, asking questions, stating opinions clearly and directly, and searching for underlying causes that might shed light on possible outcomes. The College encourages proactive, open, and authentic communication and promotes a positive approach to resolving problems in the workplace through a variety of conflict resolution options. Employees are expected to initiate problem-solving at an early stage, in an open manner, without retaliation, and as close as possible to the source of conflict. In most cases, talking with one's supervisor is a highly effective way to deal with a problem or concern. However, an employee may discuss problems or issues with a higher level manager instead of, or in addition to, their supervisor. Usually, this would be a more senior level person in the employee's area. (Human Resources can assist employees in setting up these lines of communication). Employees are encouraged to avail themselves of a variety of conflict resolution resources—articles, online training modules, and other informational sources are available on the College portal under "conflict resolution resources," or through the HR office. Human Resources also provides conflict resolution ideas and coaching for difficult situations, helping employees develop a plan for effectively dealing with conflict situations.

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