

STEP #1: PREPARE

WHAT TO DO

- Have your emotions under control. Calm yourself and be prepared – or consider waiting until you can get to that place.
- Prepare your description of the conflict in as small and specific way as possible.
- Be prepared to respect the other person's response and openness to discussion.

WHAT *NOT* TO DO

- Don't assume you know how the other person feels or why they did what they did.
- Don't create a long list of problems – focus on one or two that are most important to you.
- Be prepared to hear that you are also contributing to the conflict in some way.

STEP #2: ACTION

WHAT TO DO

- Pick a time when you and the other person are likely to have a few minutes and the problem is not "hot".
- Ask – "May I talk with you about something?"
- Describe your plan - "I would like to tell you about a problem I am having and then I would like to hear how you see it."
- Describe the conflict/problem as you experience it and why it is important to you.
- Invite the other person to explain how they see the situation and listen closely to their response.
- Check your understanding of the other person by summarizing what you heard.

WHAT *NOT* TO DO

- Don't discuss the reason you believe they do it or their intentions ("You did that because...").
- Describe your feelings when the conflict occurs, but don't act them out.
- Don't communicate those feelings as judgments or "you" statements ("You make me angry"), but instead as "I" statements ("I feel angry when this happens").
- Don't jump to conclusions and solutions. This is a time for understanding both sides of the conflict.

STEP #3: SOLUTION

WHAT TO DO

- Identify any areas where you both agree. ("Sounds like 'x' is important to both of us.")
- Exchange ideas on actions that might help the situation. ("How about if we tried 'x'??")
- Look for actions that will work for both of you ("Would 'x' work for you?")
- Keep the conversation focused on today and the future, not the past. ("That's what I have done in the past, what would be helpful going forward?")
- Propose solution(s) that meet your interests and theirs.

WHAT *NOT* TO DO

- Don't give in or come to an agreement too quickly without careful thinking
- Don't rehash the conflict without moving to solutions
 - Don't blame one another
- Don't be disappointed if the discussion does not lead to an agreement. Don't make the problem worse by overreacting in frustration.

STEP #4: AGREEMENT

WHAT TO DO

- Check to be sure you are in agreement about who will do what and by when.
- Thank the other person for their willingness to listen to you and work with you.
- Remember to hold up your end of the agreement.
- Watch for opportunities to recognize when the other person follows up as agreed.