

# Conflict in the Workplace

## How to Handle This Common Work Stressor

Here's a little information that outta raise the hair on the back of your neck:

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*The effects of conflict in the workplace are widespread and costly. Its prevalence, as indicated by three serious studies, shows that 24-60% of management time and energy is spent dealing with anger. This leads to decreased productivity, increased stress among employees, hampered performance, high turnover rate, absenteeism and at its worst, violence and death.*

~Business Know-How.Com

Good times. And you wanted a job.

First, let me direct you to the tools already available on this site for handling difficult co-workers and/or your own negativity in contributing to conflict:

**Warning:** Make sure this is **YOUR** business. Many times, we get involved in other people's workplace conflict because we believe it is the right and kind thing to do. And we make a mess of it. Or we end up in the middle of it. Here are some articles for ensuring you are seeing things CORRECTLY before inserting yourself into the conflict:

But if you've already read those, and you still need help in getting your workplace conflict handled, and you are sure this is YOUR business, here are some suggestions:

- Make sure you let someone know you are handling this situation in the near future. Alert HR, your supervisor, Legal...someone else needs this information. Trust me.
- Ensure the interaction takes place in a confidential and quiet environment.
- [Listening](#) is the main reason this is so off-track. When we feel HEARD, we aren't inclined toward anger, gossip, creating silos or cliches...we only do these things because we need our side/view heard. P.S. This is also why we YELL.

Tell the parties that there is one rule here: **No interrupting**. Give each person a chance to tell their ENTIRE story, until they say, "I am finished." You can facilitate this by asking, "Is there anything else?" until you hear, "No. I am finished."

- Summarize, in your own words, what you heard the individual say. Then turn to the other party and ask for their version. Repeat.
- Ask each party for ONE THING that they would like to see change. You could phrase this as:

*"What is one thing you would like to see handled differently in the future?"*

or

- *"If you were in my role, what would you suggest I do to remedy this situation?"*

If you get no response or an "I don't know" then respond with:

*"If you don't know what you need here or what would make things better for you...how can I know? I need you to participate in the solution."*

**Don't use a snarky [tone of voice](#) here.** Your goal is to not let either party know who you side with (and it would be ideal if you didn't side with either of them!).

- Your intention is to make them the PROBLEM-SOLVERS here (as they were the PROBLEM-MAKERS). You are not the mom. You are not the President. You may have some advice, but if you give it, they will keep coming back for more.

Ultimately, you may need to get your manager or an HR professional involved. This may also escalate into disciplinary action. Everyone's job in the workplace is two-fold : To manage results AND maintain relationships. In this case, the second one is being violated.

You have every right to expect a polite and agreeable workplace. If these two are not willing to at least FAKE IT, then it is time to move them out of the organization. Follow your company's process for termination.

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