

HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTS WITH ANYBODY



WHAT SHUTS COMMUNICATION DOWN

- 1) **Name calling and sarcasm** are forms of contempt. Their intention is to insult and make the other person feel bad.
It also includes hostile humor, mockery, putting the other person down. Often, these remarks go along with negative body language: sneering, smirking, rolling eyes, curling lip, or just plain apathy and lack of interest.
- 2) **Psychological and physical bullying** include making threats, and pushing, shoving, hitting, or throwing things.
- 3) **Avoiding the conflict** by pretending it was OK when it wasn't, taking the blame just to stop the argument, ignoring the problem or changing the subject, or totally shutting down.
- 4) **Criticism** by directly attacking the other person's character rather than describing behavior, giving lists of complaints, and blaming the person sometimes in a shameful way. Body Language: other person looks down and/or stares at the floor. Verbal Communication: Sentences start with "YOU", or "You never..." "You always..."
- 5) **Playing the victim** by denying responsibility without trying to make things right, making excuses and saying "yes, but...", claiming "poor me", returning the complaint in the form of blame or another criticism, insinuating betrayal. Body language: folding arms, rubbing body, whiny voice, shifting body weight
- 6) **Not Listening to the whole story**, then making negative, false assumptions about the other person, generalizations, and also insisting on your point of view by repeating it.
- 7) **Total shutdown** by not talking, not listening, removing yourself, and having minimal reaction to the speaker. This is not being neutral, since it comes across to the other person as being icy, disapproving, and smug.



WHAT HELPS TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS?

- 1) **Take time to calm down** It is OK to postpone the discussion if you are not ready for it. Just don't ignore it. It is hard to think straight when you are feeling upset. Think before you say something that you might later regret.
- 2) **Have empathy for the other person** Put yourself in the other person's shoes. Try to understand where they might be coming from. How do you think the other person feels? Why might they be behaving the way they are?
- 3) **Treat the other person the way you want to be treated** Sincerely listen to the other person, and give them plenty of space to tell their side of the story. Recognize their feelings, and acknowledge their right to have those feelings, even if you do not totally understand or agree. If you have misinterpreted their feelings, apologize and ask them to explain.
- 4) **Explain your feelings** Explain how you feel about the conflict. Explain what you think might be some solutions, and what you would like as a positive outcome. What will make this a win-win situation?
- 5) **Be assertive without anger or tears** Use "I" instead of "you" messages. Instead of saying "You need to stop that", or "You hurt my feelings", say "Whenever someone does that, it makes me feel" Use a firm, but calm and pleasant tone of voice. Be factual and not judgmental in your explanations. Instead of saying "You are rude to be so late", point out the facts. "It is ½ later than we had planned. I will have to leave in ½ in order to get home for dinner".
- 6) **Bringing the conflict to a resolution** Ask the other person what they need, or what would help resolve the conflict. If you are responsible for a misunderstanding, then by all means offer a sincere apology. Explain your ideas of how to make changes so that things will go better in the future.