

# RESOLVING CONFLICT 101

A guide to navigating conflict and coming to a consensus in a productive and empowering way.



## CREATE COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Create a list of guiding values and rules for and by a group on how to interact with each other. Start by identifying behaviours that are off-limits, for example interrupting others when they are speaking. From there, have an open conversation during the creation process. Once the guidelines are complete, keep them accessible and visible to all members. Revisit the guidelines regularly, especially as new members join. This ensures that the guidelines respond to new and changing concerns.

## BUILD TRUST

Have a successful group dynamic means building trust. In a group dynamic, trust helps us believe that others will deliver on their promises, thereby increasing cooperation and productivity. It also creates an environment where members can share their opinions, intentions, and values. One way to build trust is by holding regular socialization opportunities that allow members to connect beyond just their work.



## IDENTIFY DEEPER ISSUES

When conflict arises, there are often deeper issues at play. For example, feeling that one has been disrespected or their inputs overlooked. It is important to practice active listening to identify the root cause of a conflict. Add these issues to your community guidelines as you see fit. For example, speaking in a respectful manner and tone.

## OVERCOME "US VS THEM" MENTALITY

When conflict arises, it is common to see other's views and positions as more extreme and opposite from yours than they really are. To prevent this, remind the group of your common goals and objectives. The more points of connection you identify, the easier it will be to remember your group's purpose.



## DON'T ASSUME

It is best not to assume that other people are experiencing things the same way you are. When someone says something we disagree with, we are often quick to speak in defence of our position. Instead, stop to reflect on what they may be experiencing. If you need more clarity, try using open-ended questions like "How does this issue make you feel?". It can help to use "I" statements to describe how you're feeling. This avoids putting the blame on others.

## PRACTICE FORGIVENESS

Practice forgiving people for how they may have contributed to conflict, and acknowledge people's efforts to resolve it. It's also important to give people space to change their minds.



**DISAGREEMENTS CAN BE A GREAT WAY TO FORM IDEAS, BUT WHEN IT GOES TOO FAR, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!**



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