

# Support Guide Conflict Management



# Conflict management

## What is Conflict ?

This self-help sheet outlines some ways of understanding conflict, what can trigger conflict, and how you can try to manage and resolve conflicts.

Conflict is broadly defined as a serious disagreement or argument, typically one that is protracted. Conflict is perfectly natural in relationships and in some instances can encourage healthy discourse and productivity. If you are working or studying with peers and colleagues, its normal that you will disagree from time to time. Some of us will find conflict easier to deal with than others and given that most of us experience conflict at some point, its good to know how best to handle conflict when the need arises.

### **Understanding Conflict**

Conflict often exists when disagreements lead to arguments and struggles between people with competing ideas and/or personal interests. There are many sources of conflict; differences of opinion, dissatisfaction, discriminatory or unfair treatment, feelings of insecurity, fear of redundancy, clashes of personality and misunderstandings or breakdowns in communication can all lead to conflict. Sometimes the source of conflict can appear trivial, but it can often relate to deeper personal or relational needs from one or both of the parties involved. Conflict can cause strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment, discomfort and the breakdown of relationships.



## Examples of healthy and unhealthy responses to conflict.

Unhealthy responses are more likely to trigger or exacerbate conflict.

× An inability to recognize and respond to the issues that matter to the other person

✓ The capacity to empathise with the other person's viewpoint

× Explosive, angry, hurtful, and resentful reactions

✓ Calm, non-defensive, and respectful reactions

× Withdrawal, resulting in; rejection, isolation, shaming and the fear of abandonment

✓ A readiness to forgive and forget, and to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger

× An inability to compromise

✓ The ability to seek compromise and avoid punishing mistakes

× Feeling fearful or avoiding conflict; expecting a bad outcome

✓ A belief that facing conflict constructively head on is the best thing for both sides

## How to manage and resolve conflict?

- Stay Calm

Many of us find conflict intimidating and uncomfortable. Try to manage your stress levels and remain calm.

Remember to regulate your breathing. Staying calm will allow you to better manage the conflict. If you feel that your emotions are getting the better of you, you should express this verbally or excuse yourself from the situation.

- Avoid negative comments and show respect

Be respectful of the other person and their viewpoint even if you do not agree with it. By avoiding disrespectful actions and comments you will help to resolve conflicts faster and lessen any longer-term impacts.

- Listen for what is felt and said

When you listen, you connect more to your own needs and emotions as well as to those of others. Listening also strengthens, informs, and makes it easier for others to hear you when it's your turn to speak.



- Make conflict resolution the focus rather “being right”

Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than “winning” the argument should be the intended objective.

- Focus on the present

If you’re holding onto past conflicts, your ability to see the reality of the present situation will be impaired. importance of Non-verbal communication. When people are in the middle of a conflict, the words they use can often misdirect from the issues at the heart of the problem. By paying close attention to the other person’s nonverbal signals or “body language,” such as facial expressions, posture, gestures, and tone of voice, you can often better understand what the person is really trying to communicate.

- Pick your battles


Conflicts can be draining, so it’s important to consider whether the issue is worth your time and energy. Don’t view the decision not to be engaged in conflict negatively but rather as a conscious decision.

- Forgive

Be willing to forgive. Resolving conflict is impossible if you’re unwilling or unable to forgive others. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to prove someone wrong or to punish them and instead to seek to forgive and forget.

- Know when to let something go

If you can’t come to an agreement, agree to disagree. It takes two people to keep an argument going. If a conflict is going nowhere, you can choose to disengage and move on.



Speak to someone at **the BUE Student Hub Counselling Service** where advisors can help you with the techniques above.

You can pass by our offices at the BUE Library Lower Floor.

Not on campus and want more information? You can contact us anytime via our email address **[thestudenthub@bue.edu.eg](mailto:thestudenthub@bue.edu.eg)**

The student Hub is a safe, friendly and free space for you. We are here to help you. We are listening.