

FIVE BASIC METHODS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

| METHODS | WHAT HAPPENS WHEN USED | APPROPRIATE TO USE WHEN | INAPPROPRIATE TO USE WHEN |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Denial or Withdrawal | Person tries to solve problem by denying its existence. Results in a win/lose situation. | Issue is relatively unimportant; timing is wrong; cooling off period is needed; short-term use; or a need for more information. | Issue is important; when issue will not disappear, but build. |
| Suppression or Smoothing Over | Differences are played down; surface harmony exists. Results in win/lose in forms of resentment, defensiveness, and possible sabotage if issue remains suppressed. | Same as above, also when preservation of the relationship is more important at the moment. | Reluctance to deal with conflict leads to evasion of an important issue; when others are ready and willing to deal with the issue. |
| Dominance | One's authority, position, majority, rule, or persuasive minority settles the conflict. Results in win/lose if dominated party sees no home for self. | Influence comes with position of authority, or when this method has been agreed upon, or conflict is life-threatening to "at risk" clients. | Losers have no way to express needs; could result in future disruptions. |
| Compromise or Negotiation | Each party gives up something to meet midway. Results in win/lose if "middle of the road" position ignores the real diversity of the issue. | Both parties have enough leeway to give; resources are limited; when win/lose stance is undesirable; there are several good ideas that result in a workable compromise. | Original inflated position is unrealistic; solution is too watered down to be effective; commitment is doubted by the parties involved. |
| Collaboration | Abilities, values, and expertise of all are recognized; each person's position is clear, but emphasis is on a group solution. Results in win/win for everyone. | Time is available to complete the process; parties are committed and trained in use of the process; and sufficient trust exists in the work environment. | The condition of time, abilities, trust, and commitment are present. |