

Tips on how to manage conflict

If you are in conflict with someone and you don't know how to deal with it, some of these tips may be helpful.

If there is no threat of physical violence, talking it out is the best solution. Face-to-face contact is better than letters and messages—and a good deal better than banging on walls, throwing things, or complaining about it to everyone else.

Choose a good time to approach the other person so that neither of you is rushed. Don't start when the other person is on the way to work, or you've had a terrible day, or you're just about to cook dinner. That will only add to the frustration. Find a place where you can both sit comfortably and quietly for a while. Explain that the conflict has been worrying you and you'd like to sort it out.

Think beforehand about what you want to say. It's important to state clearly what the problem is and how you feel about it.

Don't blame the other person for everything or begin with your opinion of what should be done. Avoid name-calling—it only makes it harder for the person to hear what you are saying.

Don't be tempted to interpret the other person's behaviour. Don't say 'You're blocking my driveway on purpose, just to make me angry'. Instead, say 'When your car blocks my driveway I get angry because it is difficult to get in or out'.

Give the person a chance to tell you the other side of the story. Be prepared to relax, listen and take everything in.

Let the person *know* you are listening. You may not agree, but there's nothing more frustrating than trying to talk to someone who doesn't appear to be listening. Say that you're glad you're talking about the problem. This helps to ease the tension and is a great help in moving things towards an agreement.

When you've reached this point, try working on the dispute cooperatively. Work out what you both have to do to resolve the problem. Two or more people working on a problem together can get further than one person telling the other to change.

Since you're taking the time to work on a problem, take the time to get it right. Get the whole problem out in the open. Don't leave out the part that seems less important or is the hardest to talk about. Those are the things that will ruin the solution you come up with.

Agree to check with each other at a specific time in the future to see how things are going—and don't forget to do it.

If things have gone too far for you to handle it by yourself, there is help at hand.

The Dispute Resolution Centres provide a free, confidential and impartial mediation service throughout Queensland. Trained mediators are available to guide discussion and help you reach a solution.

For more information:

Dispute Resolution Branch
Department of Justice and Attorney-General
GPO Box 149
Brisbane Qld 4001

Level 1 Brisbane Magistrates Court
363 George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Brisbane area

Ph: 3239 6269

Fax: 3239 6284

1800 017 288

Regional area toll free

For mediation services:

South Queensland

Ph: 3239 6007

Fax: 3239 6284

1800 017 288

Regional area toll free

email: drc.sq@justice.qld.gov.au

North Queensland

Ph: 4799 7870

Fax: 4799 7871

1800 809 605

Regional area toll free

email: drc.nq@justice.qld.gov.au

Far North Queensland

Ph: 4039 8742

Fax: 4039 8743

1800 671 680

Regional area toll free

email: drc.fnq@justice.qld.gov.au

Central Queensland

Ph: 4938 4249

Fax: 4938 4294

1800 817 927

Regional area toll free

email: drc.central@justice.qld.gov.au

Mackay-Whitsundays

Ph: 4967 4404

Fax: 4967 4402

1800 501 576

Regional area toll free

email: drc.mkywhit@justice.qld.gov.au

Wide Bay

Ph: 4125 9225

Fax: 4125 9227

1800 681 109

Regional area toll free

email: drc.wb@justice.qld.gov.au