



## Preparing for the Conflict Resolution Process

### What to Expect

The Facilitation session consists of several steps:

#### 1. Initial Joint Session

At this initial meeting, the facilitator meets with all of the employees involved and explains the process being used and the role of the facilitator. The issues will not be discussed at this initial session. The facilitator will review the State of Delaware Conflict Resolution Process Agreement Form and ask each employee to sign it prior to beginning the process.

#### 2. Individual Sessions

The facilitator will meet individually with each employee. Anything that is said during these individual meetings will be treated as confidential and will not be shared at the next joint session without consent.

#### 3. Joint Facilitation Session

This joint session will be held to help the employees to work through and resolve their problems. The discussion in this session will focus on what needs to be done to improve the way the employees work together, what the employees can do to make that improvement, and to make some agreements on how we can make that happen.

If the process is used in place of a formal grievance, and a resolution is reached, then the facilitator will assist the parties in developing a written settlement agreement.

### Your Responsibilities

Your responsibilities are to:

- Listen respectfully to the other person's point of view.
- Come with an open mind.
- Have a willingness to try to find a solution.

If you have any questions, please contact Larry Trunfio, Conflict Resolution Program Administrator, at (302) 739-1990.

**Human Resource Management  
Statewide Training and Organization Development**

## PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

These principles are useful suggestions and pointers that will help you prepare for a productive, constructive collaborative problem solving experience.

### **1. Listen Actively**

Listening is the most important part of communication. If we do not hear what the other parties are communicating, we cannot resolve a conflict. Active listening also includes noticing what the other person is saying with intonation and body language.

### **2. Think Before Reacting**

The tendency in a conflict situation is to react immediately. In emergencies, fast physical reaction can save lives. In workplace conflicts, we may say things without thinking that damage relationships. In order to resolve conflict successfully, it is important to consider possible outcomes.

### **3. Attack the Problem - NOT each other!**

Conflict is very emotional. When emotions are high, sometimes we attack the person on the other side of the problem. What is the problem underlying the emotion? What is the cause, rather than the symptom?

### **4. Accept Responsibility**

Every conflict has many sides. There is enough responsibility for everyone. Attempting to place blame creates resentment and anger. In order to resolve a conflict, we must accept our share of the responsibility and eliminate the concept of blame.

### **5. Use Direct Communication**

With an "I-Message" we express our own wants, needs or concerns to the listener. "I- Messages" are clear and non-threatening ways to express information. Consider the differences in these I-Messages and YOU-Messages:

"I" Messages	"YOU" Messages
I need feedback on my work.	YOU didn't give me feedback.
I'm concerned about the project.	YOU don't think I care about the project.
I want to be part of the team.	YOU don't want me to be part of the team.
I need more information.	YOU don't give me enough information.

A "YOU" Message blames or criticizes the listener, suggesting that she or he is at fault.

### **6. Look for Common Interests**

We are taught to verbalize what we want. To resolve conflict successfully we must discover:

- What is really important about the issue in conflict to all parties?
- Why is a particular outcome important to all parties?

### **7. Focus on the Future**

It is important to understand the dynamics of the relationship including the history of the relationship. But to resolve the conflicts, we must focus on the future. *What do we want to do differently tomorrow?*