

Workplace Conflict

Workplace conflict is any type of conflict which involves employees, managers, owners, customers, or others present in a workplace.

Some of the main causes of conflict include:

1. Poor communication.
2. Personality and values clashes.
3. Scarcity of resources and overwhelming workloads.
4. Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities.

Consequences of Workplace Conflict

Negative	Positive
Reduced Productivity	Promote creativity and problem-solving skills
Low Morale	Grow Empathy for others
Increased employees' turnover	Promote Emotional Expression
Absenteeism	Emergence of new leaders
Mental Health Issues	Brings changes in communication style
Financial Cost	
Poor communication	
Violence	

Some practical strategies you can use to handle conflict in the workplace.

1 Talk with the other person

- Ask the other person to name a time when it would be convenient to meet.
- Arrange to meet in a place where you won't be interrupted.

2 Focus on behaviour and events, not on personalities

- Ask the other person to name a time when it would be convenient to meet.
- Arrange to meet in a place where you won't be interrupted.

3 Listen carefully

- Listen to what the other person is saying instead of getting ready to react.
- Avoid interrupting the other person.
- After the other person finishes speaking, rephrase what was said to make sure you understand it.
- Ask questions to clarify your understanding.

4 Identify points of agreement and disagreement

- Summarise the areas of agreement and disagreement.
- Ask the other person if he or she agrees with your assessment.
- Modify your assessment until both of you agree on the areas of conflict.

5 Prioritize the areas of conflict

- Discuss which areas of conflict are most important to each of you to resolve.

6 Develop a plan to work of each conflict

- Start with the most important conflict.
- Focus on the future.
- Set up future meeting times to continue your discussions.

7 Follow through on your plan

- Stick with the discussions until you've worked through each area of conflict.
- Maintain a collaborative, "let's-work-out-a-solution" attitude.

8 Build on your success

- Look for opportunities to point out progress.
- Compliment the other person's insights and achievements.
- Congratulate each other when you make progress, even if it's just a small step. Your hard work will pay off when scheduled discussions eventually give way to ongoing, friendly communication.



For more information or assistance, you are welcome to contact Platinum Health's Mental Health Services (014 590 1700 or 080 000 6942).

EAP Counsellors (010 133 0525) are also available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to offer counselling and support.