

Tips for Conflict Conversations

Before the conversation:

- **Check your mindset.** *Are you able to approach the situation in a positive manner?*
- **Consider what you hope to accomplish.**
- **Consider the other person's perspective** and how he or she may react.
- **Set the stage.** *Make sure there is enough time to address the situation, meet in a neutral place (if possible), and remember to bring any materials you think will be useful.*

During the conversation:

- **Set ground rules.** *Ask participants to agree to treat each other respectfully, listen, and attempt to understand other points of view.*
- **Agree conflict exists.** *One of the first steps to solving conflict is to agree it exists. Try to speak in terms of "we" instead of "you" to avoid making it seem personal.*
- **Express the problem** – *Allow each person to express his or her view of the conflict or problem without interruption.*
- **Acknowledge the other person's perspective** – *Consider what's been said before moving on. Paraphrase what you heard so the other person can validate it.*
- **Identify the source** – *Is the problem interpersonal or does it involve a task, process, or role clarity?*
- **Focus on work issues** – *How does the problem affect work and how will fixing it help the organization. Seek common ground.*
- **Explore approaches** – *Discuss various ways you could handle the situation.*
- **Agree on a solution and follow up** – *After agreeing on a solution or agreeing to further analysis of potential solutions, set a follow-up meeting.*
- **Thank others** for listening and for partnering to resolve conflict.