

Principles for Conflict Resolution



These are taken from the principles used by professional mediators and adapted for your use.

1. Any agreement has to be to the satisfaction of the parties concerned.

The responsibility for defining the problem, setting the agenda and agreeing the solution rests with the people in the dispute.

2. The content of the conversation is confidential -

- within the conversation itself - you must not divulge any confidences that are shared with you, unless you are given permission to do so. This rule of confidentiality does not apply if someone shares an intent to commit a criminal act, or something that involves harm to themselves or others.

- in respect of further proceedings (except with the express permission of both sides)

3. You are impartial and have to be seen as such throughout the proceedings.

People will perceive bias in different ways. You must have no personal or emotional involvement in the issue.

People are likely to perceive bias if they observe you -

- relating more comfortably with 'the other side' i.e. more nods, smiles, eye contact.

- summarising the other side of the case more fully.

- taking more account of the welfare of one person than another.

- using one person's name more.

- showing that they have common activities or interests outside the conversation.

4. People in the conversation must have the authority to settle.

When undertaking a conversation about conflict, you need to have all the people in the room. People can't agree things on behalf of others.

5. The people in the conversation agree a resolution is needed.

Often when there is a high degree of conflict over a period of time it is because one person believes that any adaptation or change has to come from elsewhere. In conflict resolution processes, people have to agree that there is a problem which needs resolving and that they are committed to exploring the issues jointly.